HISTORY

of the

NEW WILMINGTON
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1809 - 1969

By

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FOREWORD

The preparation of this history has been indeed a labor of love. Nonetheless it has been a labor. It has entailed the scrutiny of many volumes of Minutes, some of them dating well over a century ago and almost beyond deciphering; and a multitude of other records of the past and the near-present. It has required the following of two congregations during their two parallel careers of more than half a century until they became one. It has necessitated the attempt to fit the decades of development into their proper historical framework. But it has been a fascinating endeavor!

Among the readers there are sure to be some who will be disappointed at the omission of certain features in which they had a special interest--such as the patterns and personnel of Sabbath School development or musical leadership. But to have included these in any detailed fashion would have enlarged this volume beyond the scope originally envisioned for it. The author asks the readers' indulgence for its defects, and earnestly expresses the hope that this brief volume will add to our church's understanding and appreciation of its past--that past which is only prelude to the future.

-Rev. R.W. Graves

CHAPTER I

Presbyterian Beginnings In Scotland

Many of the churches of the Presbyterian order in New England, New York and New Jersey were founded by English Puritans of Presbyterian persuasion. But the founding fathers of Pennsylvania's Presbyterian congregations were overwhelmingly Scotch-Irish--deriving originally from Scotland, transferring for a time to Northern Ireland, and ultimately colonizing Pennsylvania, particularly the western half of the State. How did this come to be?

To give a proper answer to this question we really need to go back quite a ways in Christian history--back, indeed, to the beginnings of the Christian Church. The Church was born on the Day of Pentecost, when as Christ had promised, the Holy Spirit flooded his disciples with power and constituted them the body of Christ. In spite of persecution and martyrdom the Church grew rapidly and soon spread over the Mediterranean world and beyond to the farthest outposts of the Roman Empire. In the year 313 Emperor Constantine granted religious liberty throughout the entire Roman dominion, and gave imperial favor and support to Christianity.

Two somewhat different types of Christian belief and church structure began to emerge: the Eastern and the Western. In 1056 the two broke away from each other, the Eastern Church coming to be known as the Eastern Orthodox and the Western the Roman Catholic. That division remains to this day. One of the main differences between the two is the insistence of the Western Church that the Bishop of Rome is the Church's earthly head, and the Eastern Church's refusal to accept the papacy.

With the coming of the 16th Century the Western Church was ripe for reformation: many corruptions, superstitions, and abuses of power had fastened like barnacles upon it. The German doctor of theology Martin Luther was the chief agent of this drastic overhaul, and as he was forced out of the Church of Rome, Protestant forms of Christianity arose, independent of Rome. A brilliant and dedicated young French lawyer named John Calvin became leader of the Protestant movement in France; and later by his preaching and writing made the Swiss city of Geneva the fountainhead of reform throughout Europe.

One of Calvin's ablest disciples was a Scot named John Knox. He brought from Geneva the teachings of Calvin and became leader of the men who planted the Protestant Reformation in Scotland. Scotland was an independent kingdom at that time--the middle of the 16th century-- and it had suffered greatly from a particularly corrupt, ignorant and greedy clergy under Rome. Scotland hailed the Reformation with immense enthusiasm. Its Parliment voted to renounce the authority of the Pope, forbade the celebration of Mass, adopted Knox's Book of Discipline which provided for the form of government we call Presbyterian government by elders (presbyters) chosen by the people, and graduated series of church "courts" from kirk session through presbytery and synod to General Assembly. The new Reformed Church of Scotland adopted for its doctrinal guide the noble "Scots Confession" which was largely the work of John Knox. This Confession is included in the present day Book of Confessions of our United

Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

With the death of Queen Elizabeth of England in 1603, the kingdoms of England and Scotland were united under James I (who had been James VI of Scotland), and together with Wales became "Great Britian." James disliked Presbyterianism because of its form of government, which fostered the spirit of liberty among the people. Thus he attempted to force the rule of bishops, after the Church of England pattern, upon the Scottish people; and also the use of the Anglican Prayer Book. But union with England only heightened Scotland's devotion to the Scottish Church; national fervor saw in the Church's General Assembly the real successor to the old Scottish Parliment. Thus there followed many decades of bitter struggle between James I and his Stuart descendants, and the Scottish Church and people. During the "Killing Times" when many Scots suffered cruel martyrdom rather than yield to the Crown, a "Solemn League and Covenant" as it was called, was signed in Edinburgh in the year 1638 by a vast host of the Scottish people and their leaders, some signing with blood drawn from their veins. From this came the term "Covenanters," a name later applied to a much smaller group, otherwise known as Reformed Presbyterians, who became a body independent of the Church of Scotland in 1743.

After the excitements and intense religious fervor of the 16th and 17th Centuries, with the coming of the 18th Century a reaction set in, and the Age of Rationalism, as it has been called, began to take its toll of the spritual life of the Scottish Church. Much of the preaching from Scottish pulpits became moralistic and philosophical instead of centering in the grace of the God in Christ, and the "Moderates" rather than the men of warm evangelical conviction gained control. At length a group of the latter led by Ebenezer Erskine became the nucleus of a minority party protesting the cold rationalism of the Church and attacking the practice of "patronage" --by which the leading "laird" or landholder in the parish and the right to nominate the minister of the parish church. Finally this group seceded to form the Associate Presbyterian Church. They were generally given the name of "Seceders," after their break-away in 1733. So now in Scotland there were three Churches of Presbyterian origin: the Church of Scotland (the "Auld Kirk"), the Reformed Presbyterian Church or Covenanters, and the Associate Presbyterian Church or Seceders.

During the first half of the 17th Century the English government seized large tracts of land in the north of Ireland because its possessors had been rebels against the British Crown. The Irish were dispossessed of their holdings, turned out homeless, and wandered off to the south. Their places were taken by settlers whom the government brought chiefly from Scotland. During the "Killing Times" in Scotland many more fled from that land to Northern Ireland. Virtually all of these immigrants to Ulster were Presbyterians--"Auld Kirk," Covenanters and Seceders. This is the origin of the "Scotch-Irish"--Scottish in background, Irish in location, and Presbyterian to the core.

In the course of the next century they suffered much oppression from their landlords, who were generally English gentry and loyal to the English Church. Also, the Scotch-Irish who were in business or industry were the victims of many

restrictions imposed on them by the government when it came to manufacturing or exporting their products. So began a succession of Scotch-Irish emigrations to the American colonies, as many thousands of them, wave upon wave, made their way to the British dominions in America to seek a better life. A very large proportion of them entered by the port of Philadelphia, and finding the best lands in Eastern Pennsylvania already appropriated and settled, pushed across the mountains to the Indian lands of the West.

CHAPTER II

Western Pennsylvania After The American Revolution

The settlement of Western Pennsylvania proceeded very slowly until Sullivan's expedition in 1779 broke the back of Indian power and menace. But once the Indian threat had been removed, settlers from the East began to pour into the country; a large proportion of them Scottish and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, including many of the Seceders and the Covenanters. This immigration was greatly augmented by the American government's setting apart, after the War of Independence, large sections of land in our area as "Donation Lands," so called, because they were offered as a kind of "soldiers' bonus" to veterans of the Revolution. While a considerable number of the veterans had no interest in taking up these claims, having no stomach for the life of the backwoods pioneer, there were always others, both individuals and land companies, eager to buy them after they were thrown open to the general public in 1792. After the Indian treaty of 1795 virtually all further peril from Indian depradations was forever removed, and there came almost a tidal wave of immigration even into northwestern Pennsylvania, which had been the slowest to fill up with permanent settlers. Thus it was in 1797 that Samuel Scott and his son Alexander came from Washington County and selected a tract of land about a mile southwest of what is now New Wilmington; to be followed two months later by John Waugh, who took up 425 acres of land in what is now our village.

The Indians who were the aboriginal occupants of our region deserve more than a passing glance. They were almost entirely Iroquois and Delawares. The Six Nations of the Iroquois were a powerful warlike people who had developed a strong federation and a highly advanced culture. Of their federation it was the Senecas who dominated this area. The Delawares, as the English settlers called them (they called themselves the Lenni Lenape) were also in our area in considerable numbers. At one time a powerful tribe, they had degenerated badly and had been driven out of their original hunting grounds along the Delaware River and forced westward across the mountains. The Iroquois contemptuously called them "women." There were many Indian villages of mixed Iroquois and Delawares in our neighborhood, all of them bearing the generic name of Kuskuski. One of the largest of these occupied a tract a short distance southwest of what is now New Castle.

Once permanent settlers began to take up their claims in our neighborhood

in considerable numbers, they had more to fear from wild animals than from Indians. Bears, wolves and panthers roamed the primitive forests which had not yet yielded to the ax. One of the early residents, Hugh McKean, shot a bear that was trying to force its way into his springhouse, only to find the bear's mate at his back. She chased him into his cabin and would not leave his door until he finally put her to rout by throwing burning rags at her. John Waugh Jr. was followed a long distance by a panther, and George Thompson was tracked by another which would not leave the vicinity of his cabin until he had built a large fire in front of his door. Wolf-packs were a great menace, and did fearful depradations with the sheep. Hugh Mercer was the famous bear hunter of the region, using a long wooden pike or spear as his only weapon. On every clearing, rattlesnakes and copperheads were found in great abundance, and laborers would often wrap their lower legs around with thick layers of rags to protect them.

My readers have probably read enough descriptions of the primitive life of the pioneers to need no detailed picture of it here. Wild meat was abundant but it was a long wait in any year until corn and potatoes were available for use. Fortunately, a variety of wild fruits and berries supplemented the meagre fare, and "sweet'nin'" could be procured in abundance from the sugar maples. It was not long before grist mills sprang up in strategic locations: by 1803 Mercer County had thirteen of them. The first one in the Neshannock country was built for Hugh Means in 1800 by the millwright Joseph Kirk. Little by little the frontier began to take on the aspect of civilization.

CHAPTER III
Church Beginnings In New Wilmington

Pioneer Presbyterianism in this country probably owes more to a young graduate of Glasgow University named Francis Makemie than to any other of the missionaries sent out from Scotland and Ireland to organize and shepherd Presbyterian congregations in the American colonies. Makemie was dispatched to this country by the Presbytery of Laggan in Ireland in 1663, and he did valiant service in Maryland and Delaware. A strong congregation developed in Philadelphia, and by 1758 Presbyterianism was sufficiently vigorous to become organized into a synod: the Synod of New York and Philadelphia. By 1788 it was divided into four synods, under a supreme judicatory, the General Assembly. Its churches all stemmed from "the Auld Kirk," the Church of Scotland, from which the Seceders and Covenanters had "come out."

Our own area here was included in the Synod of Virginia and the Presbytery of Ohio. The presbytery included all the Pennsylvania territory west of the Monongahela and of a line drawn northward to Presque Isle. It was under its care that in 1798 a congregation was formed called "the Forks of Big Beaver Presbyterian Church," later to be the Hopewell Church in what is now New Bedford. One year later, in 1799, the Neshannock Church was organized--now in New Wilmington but during its first hundred years located one mile west of the village.

The Forks of Big Beaver and the Neshannock churches became a "linked charge" under one pastor. However, the two congregations had great difficulty securing a pastor because they were separated by the Shenango River, which was often swollen by flooding, and was icebound in winter--difficult to negotiate by a man on horseback! Finally in 1800 the Reverend William Wick accepted the call of the joint congregations and was ordained to the gospel ministry by the Presbytery of Ohio, meeting in the Hopewell Church. Mr. Wick, then 32 years of age, had been one of the pupils of the great Dr. John McMillan--"Father McMillan" as he was called--who was instrumental in training so many of the Presbyterian ministers of this frontier area in his "log college" at Canonsburg, Pa. Thus, Mr. Wick became the first pastor of our sister church in New Wilmington, the Neshannock Presbyterian Church.

There is no question that churches were desperately needed during those post-Revolution days on the wild western frontier. Wartime years and the years that follow wars have always been times of the relaxation of religious and moral standards; and these conditions were augmented by waves of infidelity and atheism that had been stimulated by the French Revolution and its anti-Christian overtones. It must be remembered that along the Western frontier France was very popular because of the support she had given the colonies during the War of Independence and because she was in perennial conflict with England, hated by the pioneers in general because of British employment of the Indians as allies (and to the frontiers-men Indians were "poison"), and by the Scotch-Irish in particular because of English oppressions of the Scottish and Irish Presbyterians in the Old Country. Thus, infidelity and atheism became quite the vogue in many of the Western settlements, particularly among those who, far from settled communities and organized churches, reveled in their new freedom from the restraints of civilization. If we are in the habit of thinking that all of our colonial or early-American ancestry were pious folk, we had better think again! The Minutes of the Presbyterian General Assembly for 1796 and 1798 bear testimony to "the great decay of vital piety, and the prevalence of infidelity and immorality"; and of "a visible and prevailing impiety and a contempt for the laws and institutions of religion, and an abounding infidelity which in many instances tends to atheism itself." They also testify that "profaneness, pride, luxury, injustice, intemperance, lewdness, and every species of debauchery and loose indulgence greatly abound." A few years earlier, in 1783, the last year of the American Revolution, Presbyterians of New England (New England, that daughter of Puritanism!) in a publication which they called "A Voice from the Wilderness" described the spiritual and moral tone of the country in the following words:

"Never was the public worship of God as generally voted away as at present. Many, grudging the expense of supporting it, have dismissed God's ambassadors and locked up the doors of his house. Others have exchanged a learned, godly ministry for ignorant fanatical intruders, merely because they pretend to deal out to them their wild and undigested effusions without salary, while of the remainder among whom their ministers still make a shift to continue, the greatest number seldom attend, and not a small proportion of those who attend pass the sacred

hours of worship in sauntering, gazing, dozing and sneering ...."

"Country youth learn profanation on board of privateers and in the camps .... Intemperance sends man below the brutal herd. Multitudes of men each year are destroyed by it, and women too. Ante-nuptial offenses are almost forgotten to be a crime. Adultery increases; vile books are printed and read with avidity; extortion, theft, fraud and lying increasingly abound ...."

If these conditions prevailed in settled and civilized New England after the War of Independence, what must we suppose was the situation far out on the Western Pennsylvania frontier! These conditions must be borne in mind as background for the organizing of our churches in this area as the 18th Century merged into the Nineteenth.

So we come to the year 1809--an all-important year for the purposes of this book. For it was in 1809, so far as we can learn from the rather vague and confused records that have come down to us, that "The Seceder Congregation of Little Neshannock," our first ecclesiastical ancestor, was founded. For while our area was filling up with Presbyterian sons and daughters of the "Auld Kirk" from Scotland and Ireland, many representatives of the dissenting bodies--the Associate Presbyterians and Reformed Presbyterians, Seceders and Covenanters--were also pouring into Western Pennsylvania. Between these Presbyterian bodies the differences seem very slight to us today. All of them adhered to the Westminster Confession, holding it second only to the Scriptures. All of them sang only "the Psalms of David" rendered into English metre as their vehicle of praise. All of them held to strict observance of the Sabbath (and it was "Sabbath," never "Sunday"). But to these hardheaded and disputatious sons of Calvin the differences which seem minor to us were important enough to keep them apart for many years.

We know that as early as 1803 there were some Seceder families in the New Wilmington area. In 1804 there is a record of their petitioning the Associate Presbytery of Chartiers for preaching services, but the petition was refused--probably because there weren't nearly enough Seceder preachers to go around. Finally, however, there were a sufficient number of families to justify the organization of a congregation, and such organization was consummated by presbytery meeting in Mercer, at which time our congregation was linked with Cool Spring and Sandy Lake congregations. In the following year, 1810, these linked congregations were successful in calling a pastor, the Reverend Alexander Murray.

The first pastor of our church was born in Guinston, York County, Pa., in 1776. He was educated at Jefferson College in Canonsburg (later to become Washington and Jefferson College), and studied theology under the illustrious Dr. John Anderson in Service Seminary, the first theological seminary west of the Allegheny Mountains, founded by the Associate Presbyterian Church in the midst of the then wilderness of Beaver County. He was licensed in October, 1809, by Chartiers Presbytery but not ordained until July 10, 1811; thus, he came to his triple charge as a licentiate still awaiting ordination. The old records state that Mr. Murray was "a man of medium height, stoutly built, of good spirit, an able preacher, beloved by all." However, his pastoral oversight of our congregation continued only four years; for in 1814 he was released from "Little Neshannock" to give his whole

time to New Castle, Wolf Creek and Mountville. It was not until 1833 that our congregation had another pastor; for nineteen years it was sustained only by the preaching of occasional supplies.

During the years before its formal organization and immediately afterward the tiny congregation had no house of worship. It probably met only in the summer months, making use of what was called a "tent"--a three-sided structure of logs open at one end. However, now that it had a pastor, the group took steps to purchase land on the mound where Fair Oaks Cemetery now is, overlooking the wide and fertile valley of the Neshannock and central to the members and adherents of the congregation, who came from as far away as Plain Grove, Bethel, the Harbor, and Coaltown. On May 11, 1811, an article of agreement was drawn up between James Whiteside "for and in consideration of the sum of twenty dollars covenanted and agreed on or before the 11th of May 1814 to sell, sufficiently grant, convey and assure unto the trustees for the use of the congregation all that lot or parcel of land situated in Neshannock Township, Mercer County, bounded on the West by the land of John McCrumb, on the North by Hugh Means, on the East and South by said James Whiteside, to contain five acres to be surveyed in a right square."

A crude square log structure was begun on this property in 1812 for a house of worship. It was not completed until the men returned from service in the War of 1812. A floor was never laid. The walls were never "chunked" or daubed, so there was no need for windows. A doorway was cut on the south side, but it was never fitted with a door. There was no provision for heating the 28-foot square structure. Seats were made of puncheons with legs and rude backs. The pulpit was directly opposite the door.

And beyond their local interests and endeavors, what were the early settlers of this area thinking about at the time this little church had its slender beginnings? Well, it was in 1803 that President Thomas Jefferson engineered the purchase of the enormous Louisiana Territory--560,000,000 acres at a price of less than three cents an acre. Thus the United States gained not only a vast tract of land but the control of the Mississippi River. This was a matter of immense concern to our area, for it opened up limitless possibilities for trade. The return of the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1807, with the explorers' fascinating and detailed reports of the new lands traversed all the way to the Pacific, must have fired the imagination of our community's forefathers. In 1808 James Madison was elected President. Trouble was brewing with England over her high-handed policies on the ocean, and "war hawks" in Congress were advocating a declaration of war. The Indians in the Northwest were beginning to make trouble under the leadership of Tecumseh. It was in a time of these ferments that our congregation was born.

CHAPTER IV
The Move To Town

By 1812 the "war hawk" party in Congress prevailed and this young nation was engaged in its second war with England. Bitterly opposed by all of the New England States and much of the Eastern seaboard, it was greeted with enthusiasm by the frontier country of the West. Our area contributed heavily in manpower to the War of 1812, considering its comparatively sparse population; and the road to Erie (now "the Perry Highway," named for the war hero Commodore Perry) was crowded with volunteers making their way north. With Andrew Jackson's tremendous victory at New Orleans the war was concluded (actually, the peace treaty had been already signed before that), and by 1815 the men of our area began the return to their homes.

On their return, the finishing touches, such as they were, were put on the little log chapel on the knoll at Fair Oaks. In the meantime, however, the recently organized congregation had lost its pastor, for as we related in a previous chapter, Mr. Alexander Murray in 1814 relinquished his charge over the Seceder Congregation of Little Neshannock to give his whole time to other neighboring congregations. Probably at the time of its formation in 1809 there were not more than nine or ten families in the charter membership: the Gilkeys, the Gealeys, the Thompsons, and the Andrew Reed family; the Pattons, Livingstons, the Sampsons, the Fishers, the Zuvers and the Tollands. Even by 1831 there were only 41 members, though by 1842 the number had risen to 110.

The pulpit remained vacant until 1833. Nineteen years without pastoral care, and with only the preaching of occasional supplies! There were other discouraging elements in the situation also, for the year 1816 was the terrible year of "Eighteen Hundred and Froze to Death," as it was sometimes called, when there was frost every month of the year except July and August, and the corn had to be replanted several times but without success, and all grain and fruit crops were almost total failures. "The year without a summer" it was sometimes named. Probably the small congregation had little enough means to pay a preacher if it could have secured one.

However, the little log meeting house on the knoll at Fair Oaks was beginning to show evidences of its inadequacy, and in 1831 some of the leading members met at the house of Hugh Means, Sr., to consider the possibility of repairs. It was concluded instead to erect a new building, and in the village of New Wilmington. The proposed change of location met with bitter opposition, just as it did two generations later with the Neshannock Presbyterians when a majority of them voted to exchange their rural site for the one they occupy today in the village. The judgment of our Associate Presbyterian "fathers" prevailed, and in 1833 a parcel of land was bought from James Porter on what is now known as Church Street (but apparently there was no street there then, and the only approach was from the south; for on Feb. 7, 1840, the congregation voted to accept Mr. Hammond's proposal to trade a 30-foot lane to the Mercer Road for an equal amount of land off the west side of the church lot). The new church--the first one in the village--was of frame construction. At first each family furnished its own seating,

REV. D.R. IMBRIE
1842-1867

but on Dec. 31, 1841, David Semple, L. Carman and Robert Madge were made trustees "to procure lumber and workmen to pulpit and pew the meeting house as soon as practicable." At a congregational meeting on May 2, 1842 "it was resolved that the building committee receive proposals for building pews and pulpit in N. Wilmington church and select such as they think most competent and best. On motion and resolved that all the lumber be laid on the ground by the 14th inst. On motion and resolved that Mr. D. Embrie (Revd.) be added to the above committee in the planning of the pulpit." Which was only fitting and proper, for Mr. David Imbrie (the proper spelling of his name) was the new pastor in 1842, and he undoubtedly had some interest in the kind of pulpit he was to occupy!

Thirty pews were built and installed, and extant records have preserved the names of all the families that occupied them. Now at last the church had a means whereby to finance its operations and pay its pastor a regular "stipend." For in those early days the chief method of financing a church (apart from occasional congregation-sponsored lotteries, which were not at all infrequent, though there is no mention of any in our own church records) was by pew rentals. Each family agreed to pay so much a year for its pew, the amount levied depending on the location of the seating. In our church the annual rental varied from $8 to $4.75. After Rev. Mr. Imbrie had paid for his own family pew for three years the trustees generously voted to let him have it free! In addition to assessing rents for the pews, the trustees raised money from time to time by "circulating a paper" through the congregation on which those who were willing to subscribe a certain amount would sign their names. Neither of these methods was wholly successful, for the records show that the church was continually in arrears in the payment of its pastor's salary. At the time of which we are now writing, New Wilmington's obligation, as part of a joint charge of three churches (Prospect and New Castle being the other two) was $200 a year.

Sometime during this period--probably at the time that the church moved into the village--the name "Little Neshannock" was dropped, and the organization became "The Associate Presbyterian Congregation of New Wilmington." In the congregational minutes it is usually referred to simply as "The Associate Congregation of New Wilmington." It was New Wilmington's only church.

Now we must backtrack a little, to the year 1833. It was in that year, after nineteen years of vacancy, that the joint charge of New Wilmington, New Castle and Prospect succeeded in calling a pastor, the second since its organization. The new minister, Rev. Alexander Boyd, had just come from Ireland the preceding year. It would be pleasant to be able to record that his term of service was welcome and fruitful, but the exact opposite seems to have been the case. All the old accounts agree in stating that after his release, five years and four months after his installation, he left the congregation in worse condition than he found it. One

record says, "He was pugnacious, domineering, and hateful. His pastorate was one of bitterness and strife." Another states that "he was sharp and shrewd ... impetuous, outspoken and domineering." When the congregation attempted to get rid of him, both it and the presbytery found him a hard man to fight. Even five years after his release he threatened the congregation with legal action to recover moneys which the congregation did not consider were owing to him. In the minutes of the congregational meeting of Jan. 16, 1843, we read: "Motion that we comply with Presbytery's demand on our branch as respects Mr. Boyd, not that we consider it just but to settle the matter forever," and "that Mr. Robt. Reed be appointed to carry up our money to Presbytery and demand of Presbytery and Mr. Boyd a clear receipt for the Wilmington branch and if not given to retain the money." New arrivals in the community could not be persuaded to come and hear Mr. Boyd preach, and many of the older members had dropped out. It was a disastrous interval for the frail little congregation.

But better days were ahead.

CHAPTER V
The Momentous Developments Of The 1850's

From October, 1838, until April, 1842, the pulpit of the Associate Church was vacant and the congregation was licking its wounds after an unhappy pastorate. But on April 26, 1842, a young man fresh from his theological studies in the Associate Seminary at Canonsburg--David Reed Imbrie--was ordained and installed pastor of the combined charge of New Wilmington, Mount Prospect and New Castle. He later resigned the latter two charges, but retained New Wilmington until 1867 .

His was a strong and successful pastorate, and the Associate congregation prospered under his leadership. In Mr. William McElwee's earlier history of the congregation, written in 1904, it is recorded that "Mr. Imbrie was a good, kind, honest, upright minister, like whom the world needs more ...." His salary ("stipend," as it was then called.) was never more than $400 a year, and the congregational records show that every year it was in arrears. In 1843 he received about one-third of it in "lumber, boards and labor."

Already the frame meetinghouse was beginning to prove inadequate for the needs of the congregation, and in 1854 there began to be agitation in favor either of substantial repairs or the erection of a new building. At a congregational meeting on January, 1854, it was "resolved that the Associate congregation of New Wilmington agree as soon as a contractor can be obtained to erect a meetinghouse on the lot of ground on which the house now stands .... that we build a brick house .... that the committee dispose of the old house to the best advantage .... that the building committee proceed to building as soon as two thousand dollars be subscribed or raised." Later, the dimensions of the house were set at 60 by 75 feet. Various postponements occurred, however, and it was not until 1856 that the meetinghouse was actually erected. It was a sturdy well built structure of a certain

solid dignity, and after it was abandoned as a church in 1919 it remained in use as a Community House and an annex to the high school until only a few years ago. It was razed in 1965, and many of the old-timers in our community were sorry to see its uncompromising red-brick rectangularity disappear from the scene.

Only one serious disagreement threatened the peace of the congregation during Mr. Imbrie's pastorate. It had to do with the practice of "lining out" the psalms. In the earlier days of all the churches of Scottish background there was no instrumental music to assist the singing; organs were abhorred as an evil and Romish importation into the pure worship of God. A pipe organ was, in Scottish parlance, a "kist o' whustles" (chest of whistles), and an offense to the Almighty. This may seem strange to us in view of the large place that instrumental music played in Old Testament worship; but there is no reference to any such adornments in the New Testament, so Calvin and his successors ruled them out. Thus, the singing, which incidentally was confined to metrical versions of the biblical psalms, was led in each congregation by a "singing clerk" or precentor, and the prevailing practice was for this individual to sing one line of the psalm to the congregation, in the tune to which it was assigned, after which the people sang it with him; then on to the next line in the same fashion. Probably the original reason for this custom was the scarcity of psalm books. It certainly would not seem to encourage very melodious or inspiring song! However, even after there were plenty of psalm books among the congregational membership the practice hallowed by so many years of custom was relinquished only with great regret by the older members. During Mr. Imbrie's pastorate the congregation voted to abandon the practice in 1855; but this decision met with so strong a protest that the action was rescinded. We do not know when "lining out" finally died out.

In the 1850's three events took place which were of great moment to our community and to the story of the New Wilmington United Presbyterian Church: two of them having a far wider significance. The first of these was the organization of an Associate Reformed Presbyterian congregation in New Wilmington, in 1850; the second, the founding of Westminster College here in 1852; the third, the denominational union of Associate Presbyterians and Associate Reformed Presbyterians taking place in Pittsburgh in 1858 to form the United Presbyterian Church of North America.

As if Presbyterianism were not already sufficiently represented in the little community of 200 people and its neighboring farm population by the Associate Presbyterian Church in the village and the Neshannock Presbyterian Church one mile west, an Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church was organized in New Wilmington on February 27, 1850, under the auspices of the A. R. P. Presbytery of the Lake. The congregation began with 32 members and a Session consisting of Messrs. John Neal, James McLaughry and James McConnell, with Rev. Robert Audley Brown, pastor of the neighboring Shenango A. R. P. Church, as moderator.

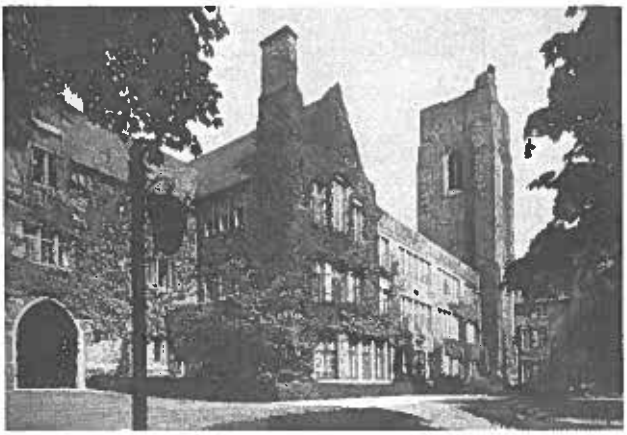
Who were the Associate Reformed Presbyterians? They were a denomination which had been formed at Pequea, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1782, by the union of most of the Associate churches and most of the Reformed Pres-

byterian or Covenanter Churches in the new nation. During the hardships and devastations of the Revolutionary War these two groups, so much alike, had felt the need of strengthening their forces by merger, particularly since they had left behind them in Great Britain the causes which had brought about their secession from the Church of Scotland and were now part of a new nation. Thus the first church union in America took place, and the church grew rapidly. However, a few of the Associate churches refused to enter the union, and their numbers were continually augmented by immigration from the Old Country; consequently, there was still an Associate Presbyterian Church, as we have seen. Some of the Covenanters also failed to enter the union, and there are Reformed Presbyterian congregations down to the present day. Thus, the 1782 union eventuated in three conservative Presbyterian "break-off" groups instead of the single one that had been hoped for.

REV. W.A. MEHARD
1852 - 1872

In the autumn of 1851 the newly formed A. R. P. Church in New Wilmington, along with the East Brook congregation, called Rev. William A. Mehard to serve this double charge. Dr. Mehard was born in Harrisville, Pa., in 1825, and studied theology in Allegheny (now Pittsburgh) Seminary. In 1858 in addition to his pastoral duties he undertook the professorship of Mathematics and Hebrew in Westminster College. After twenty years as pastor of the dual charge he resigned the care of the New Wilmington congregation, retaining East Brook. The infant New Wilmington congregation prospered under his ministry. Shortly after organizing, it erected a brick building on the location of the present church. Sometime within the next ten years the congregation sold it, and until 1886 worshipped in the chapel of Westminster College. Thus, the A. R. P. Church soon came to be thought of as "the college church"--this in spite of the fact that the college was organized under the auspices of the Associate rather than the A. R. P. denomination: an indication of how nearly identical the two groups were in belief and practice.

We have already referred to Westminster College. It came into being in New Wilmington in the year 1852, after much exploration of the possibilities of a collegiate institution on the part of the Associate Presbyteries of Shenango and Ohio. The fascinating story of the beginnings of this institution--named for the Westminster Confession of Faith--has been well told in the centennial volume, "Westminster's First Century," by Mr. Paul Gamble. From 1852 down to the present day, Church and College, though completely independent of each other in our community, have had a close, friendly, and mutually helpful relationship. The college has made an immeasurably great contribution to the denomination that gave it birth and to Christ's cause not only in this nation but to "earth's utmost bounds." The church whose history we are presently recounting is proud to have been a friend



Old Main Memorial, Westminster College

of Westminster College, and to have had the friendship of Westminster College, down through the more than a century of "the campus across the street." A multitude of our church's sons and daughters have secured their higher education in the college; many hundreds of the college's students have worshipped in the church, and scores of them in close identification with its life.

Now for a moment to a broader theater of activity. The year 1858 was "the year of the great revival" in American Protestantism. A powerful movement of the Spirit of God swept over all the churches, greatly strengthening their witness, their prayer-life and their concern. Partly as a result of this new spiritual dynamism and partly in consequence of careful exploratory attempts made by the Associate and the Associate Reformed Churches through several years to find a satisfactory basis for union, the two bodies consummated union into one denomination, in Pittsburgh, on the 26th of May, 1858. The new Church took the name, "The United Presbyterian Church of North America." Local congregations, Associate and Associate Reformed, were now members of one body. In New Wilmington, the Associate Presbyterian congregation became the First United Presbyterian Church, and the Associate Reformed the Second Church.

From 1858 to 1919 this history will now have two congregations to account for!

CHAPTER VI
A Time Of Agitation And Ferment

The events we recorded in the last chapter did not take place in a vacuum. Our church fathers in the mid-Nineteenth Century were living in stirring times. We can be sure that the ferments that were taking place in the nation were felt deeply and reacted to strongly in our community and in the two congregations whose story we are trying to tell. There was intense agitation over the slavery question. Both the Associate and the Associate Reformed bodies were uncompromisingly opposed to slavery. In the very earliest Session minutes that have come down to us from the Associate church, dated April 29, 1842, we read:

" .... John McConnel and his wife Elisabeth appeared before session and

were examined on the subject of slavery and they both disaproved of it and were admitted to full communion with us in the church." (Note: In all quotations from Session or congregational minutes the original spelling will be retained. In reporting cases of discipline, the names of the persons involved will be changed or only their initials used--for obvious reasons!).

These were the days when the Kansas-Nebraska Bill of 1854 infuriated many in the North, for it provided that the new territories should be open to slavery--contrary to the Missouri Compromise which Daniel Webster had defended so magnificently and which had come almost to have the status of the Constitution itself. The new Fugitive Slave Law added fuel to the fire and increased Northern sympathy with the plight of the enslaved Negro. Organizations sprang up for the purpose of flouting the new law and for facilitating the runaway slave's escape to Canada. One of the busiest and most successful of the "Underground Railroads" as they were called, operated in Mercer County (of which Lawrence County was then a part). Feeling as they did about slavery we can be sure that some of the good "A. P. 's" and "A. R. P. 's" shared in risky operations of these maneuvers. It is interesting to note that the year of the founding of Westminster College-- 1852--was the year of the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's powerful book, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which sold three hundred thousand copies in its first year, crystallizing sentiment in the North and bitterly antagonizing the South.

It is instructive to note, too, that an experiment was made in the development of a colony of freed slaves on a tract of land along Indian Run, just a few miles north of our community, in Mercer County. A wealthy Virginia planter, convinced that human slavery was a sin, after exploring various possibilities purchased the Mercer County tract, freed his own slaves, provided the money enabling them to buy back their wives, husbands and children in the hands of other owners, drew up plans for the future community's homes and a church, made arrangements for their transportation; and the first "colonists" began arriving in 1853, coming by train to New Brighton, by canal to New Castle, and by wagon to Indian Run. John and William Young, prominent Abolitionists of the Indian Run area and members of the Neshannock Presbyterian church at one time, handled matters at this end. At first it was a very happy colony, but in time difficulties developed and the colony eventually disintegrated. Now only grass-grown cellar holes remain to indicate the site of this benevolent attempt.

In the meantime the neighboring Neshannock church a mile west of the village was having its own problems over the slavery question. In the congregation were a few defenders of slavery, many "middle-of-the-roaders" who disapproved of slavery but were opposed to political agitation over it, and some red-hot Abolitionists. The pastor, however, Rev. Mr. McCready, gave indication of Southern sympathies, and this so offended the more radical anti-slavery element that there were two successive withdrawals from the congregation on this account. One group between 1840 and -42 "came out" and founded an independent church which they called White Chapel on the site where the White Chapel cemetery now stands, on the Grove City road about three miles northeast of New Wilmington. Though principally Presbyterian, it was never identified with any presbytery, and

eventually came under Methodist hands moving to another hilltop location where it still exists as "White Chapel." Early in the 1850's another group, disappointed by what they considered the Presbyterian General Assembly's lack of forthrightness on the slavery issue, broke away from the Neshannock congregation and united with the so-called "Free Presbyterian Church," a new denomination which had been formed shortly before by impatient anti-slavery Presbyterians in the North. The local group organized a congregation and built a meeting house about one mile southwest of New Wilmington and west of the Sharon- New Castle Road--a square red-brick structure which can still be seen, though it has been converted into a residence. It was erected in 1854. The congregation was disorganized in 1869, most of its members uniting with New Wilmington's First U. P. (formerly Associate) church.

These were some of the matters which we can be sure were of paramount interest to the progenitors of our present church, a hundred years or so ago. They were also deeply concerned for the approaches that were being made between the Associate Church and the Associate Reformed Church toward a United Presbyterian Church. Mention was made in the previous chapter of the consummation of these attempts in the union that took place in Pittsburgh in 1858. What did our two local congregations think of it? We have the answer in the Session minutes of the two congregations. In the minutes of the Associate Session dated February 6, 1857 we read:

> "Session met on appointment and was constituted by the moderator. Members present, Geo. Hogg, McFarlin, Allen, McConnell, Houston and Carman. Session proceeded to the consideration of the Basis of Union overtured by Synod. The Articals being read by the Moderator and Remarks of members Resolve that we Approve of the Testimony overtured by Synod as a proper Basis for union with the Sister Churches with which we have been Corresponding with a vue to union. Caried unanimous."

A little more than a month later a minute of the Session of the Associate Reformed church dated March 13, 1857, reads:

> "Session met according to previous arrangement to consider the 'Basis of Union' overtured by General Synod to the presbyteries and sessions and after examining it article by article the following resolutions were adopted as our report to Presbytry:
>
> 1st That we are more than ever persuaded of the desirableness of organic union of Associate and Associate Reformed Churches and would urge your reverend body to labor for this long sought union in the use of all legitimate means.
>
> 2nd That while some of the articles might be dispensed with as unnecessary this session can discern nothing in this document which is not agreeable to and founded on the Word of God and in harmony with the subordinate standards of the A. R. Church.
>
> 3rd That this session is willing and desirous for union on this basis.
>
> 4th That the A. R. Church cannot refuse to consummate union on the present basis without incurring fearful responsibility--greatly jeopardizing

her own interests and exposing herself to the charge of inconsistency and breach of faith."

Even at this date, more than a century later, one can hardly refrain from saying, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow"!

Associate (later, First United Presbyterian) building, erected 1856

CHAPTER VII

The Church's Every Day Life In Its Early Years

In the previous chapter we observed some of the larger interests of the two congregations that ultimately became the New Wilmington United Presbyterian Church. But life is not made up only of broad concerns of national or denominational moment. To a greater degree it consists of the day by day actualities which are routine and familiar. What was it like during the early and mid-Nineteenth Century years in the two churches that concern us and that finally became one church--our church?

The focus of interest and activity was of course the service of the Sabbath Day (and no other term but "Sabbath" was ever applied by our ecclesiastical forefathers to the first day of the week). The high point of the worship of Almighty

God was the sermon. All brands of Presbyterians insisted on a college-trained ministry with theological education in an approved seminary or under the tutelage of a minister of recognized ability. Therefore, a pastor's sermons were expected to give evidence of scholarship and be carefully reasoned productions. They were to be based solely on Scripture, buttressed by the Confession and the catechisms, expository of a biblical text, and primarily doctrinal, though also bearing ethical implications. Sermons read from a manuscript were frowned upon. The homilies were usually much longer than would be submitted to in our day. Naturally, among the various pastors of the two New Wilmington congregations preaching ability differed considerably. During the years of feeble beginnings our churches were able to secure only young men fresh from their theological training and just starting to try their wings. Some of these, however, either in our own churches or in others to which they were called later, became men of great homiletic ability, and at least one (as we shall see later) became nationally famous.

We have noted before that the Seceders and the A. R. P.'s adhered strictly to the practice instituted by Calvin and followed by the Scottish churches, of singing only the 150 biblical Psalms, rendered into English verse. Hymns--"the devotional compositions of uninspired men"--were completely taboo; they were not even permitted to be sung by a Seceder if on some mistaken impulse he visited the church of another denomination. There was a rugged strength to these metrical Psalms in what is usually referred to (not quite accurately) as the Rous Version; perhaps they were just the right vehicle of congregational praise for difficult and dangerous times. Some of them by intrinsic merit and long use have endeared themselves permanently to the Church Universal. We shall always love

"The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want,
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green: he leadeth me
The quiet waters by,"

or

"O thou my soul, bless God the Lord;
And all that in me is
Be stirr-ed up his holy name
To magnify and bless,"

or again

"I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
From whence doth come mine aid,
My safety cometh from the Lord,
Who heav'n and earth hath made."

However, some of the versifications were as if hammered out by a clumsy blacksmith, and could scarcely have been conducive to a worshipful spirit. For example, this from the Third Psalm:

O Lord, how are my foes increas'd!
Against me many rise,
Many say of my soul, For him
In God no Succour lies.

Arise, O Lord; save me, my God,
For thou my foes hast stroke
All on the cheekbone, and the teeth
Of wicked men hast broke."

Originally there were only twelve tunes for all these Psalms. The tyranny of the Twelve Tunes was finally broken in Scotland by the middle of the 18th Century, and by the time the Seceders came to New Wilmington a number of other tunes had been added. Of the original twelve, only "Dundee" and "Dunfermline" survive in our present Hymnbook. In announcing the Psalm the precentor or "singing clerk" would have to state which tune was going to be used, since all of them were interchangeable.

By all reports, the singing was appallingly bad. First of all, there was the "lining out", described in a previous chapter. Then there was the severe limitation of the tunes. Add to this the rough versification, and the undoubted fact that the Scotch-Irish were not a musical people. And there was no aid from musical instruments of any kind, or from a choir.

Apparently the singing clerks did not always give satisfaction, for we read in the Minutes of the First Church Session for Feb. 15, 1864:

> " ... Proceeded to Consider the order persued by the Persons Chosen by the Congragation to lead the Singing in the Congragation. After the Remarks of Members Resolved that Session is Satisfyed with the order persued by the Singing Clerks, which was decided in the negative by a unanimous vote. Resolved that the (men) Chosen to lead in singing N. Reed and J. C. Allen be envited to meet with Session on Satuardy the 20th Feby. inst. Joseph Allen and James Martain was appointed to notify said persons to meet with Session on said day ...."

The Minutes of Session for "said day" then read:

> ".... The Comitie appointed to notify J. C. Allen and Reed at last meeting reported and their Report was Accepted. N. Reed and J. C. Allen Appeared before Session. After making known to Said (men) the Cause why Session Desired an Intervue with them and the Remarks of Members and the Remarks of Said Reed and Allen it was Resolved that the Said Reed and Allen the persons Chosen by the Congragation to lead in Singing be Requested to Return to their former place of Siting in the Church which was desided in the Affirmative. Session Appointed John Hope George Allen and Imbrie McFarlin to Assist in Singing."

The Sabbaths on which the Sacrament of Communion was celebrated were the "high days" of the church year. During the earlier years of the Associate church when ministerial supplies were scarce, application had frequently to be made to presbytery for the appointment of a minister to administer the sacrament. Even when the congregation had a settled pastor it appears that Communion was not observed more often than twice a year. These Sacramental occasions were periods of awesome solemnity, and however delinquent some of the members may have been in week-by-week church attendance, every effort was made to be present for Communion. The observance was preceded by several Preparatory

Services--usually on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday afternoon. At these preaching services in which the solemnity of the coming sacrament was emphasized, the promises of the gospel underlined and the terrors of judgment highlighted, those attending received "tokens" --little lead medals usually with the name of the congregation stamped on them; and these tokens were tickets of admission to the Lord's Table, to be presented on the forthcoming Sabbath. On the great day, the pastor "fenced the Table" by warning the unworthy--those guilty of living in unconfessed sin--not to offend the Lord by coming to the Table; but inviting the truly penitent to come freely, trusting in the pardoning mercy and saving grace of God in Christ. Then during the singing of a Psalm the communicant members seated themselves by families at the long white table set up in front of the pulpit or along the aisles; the elements were passed from hand to hand down the table. Fermented wine (not grapejuice) was used, and the same chalice or "common cup" was used by all. It was not until 1881 that the United Presbyterian General Assembly urged all congregations to employ grapejuice in the sacrament instead of fermented wine, because of the strong feeling against alcoholic beverages in the denomination. Following the Communion observance on Sacrament Sabbath there was usually a service held on the Monday following, on which the "Action Sermon" was preached--the term originating from the Latin "Actio Gratiarum," meaning "the giving of thanks." It was frequently on this Monday that parents presented their children for baptism. It is to be noted that both the Associate and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Churches--and later, for many years, the United Presbyterian Church--held to "closed Communion"--that is, only members of the denominations involved were invited to the Lord's Table. This was not because the members of other Churches were believed to be unchristian, but because only those whose terms of faith and adherence could be fully known could be safely vouched for by their spiritual shepherds.

The guardianship which the early church Sessions maintained over their flocks is evident in the rigorous discipline invoked upon the erring. To quote Dr. Leonard Trinterud in his book, "The Forming of an American Tradition": "In many areas, especially in the only partially organized frontier regions, the church court or session was the only court before which the redress of wrongs could be sought. These courts were begun originally in Calvinistic churches as a means of discipline. Since all needed discipline if they were to persevere in their pilgrimage in spite of their own waywardness and the temptations of this life, these courts were part of the churches' pastoral care of the souls entrusted to them. For the wicked, they could pronounce the sentence of excommunication. For the believer who had failed, these courts offered admonition, the opportunity of public repentance, and an exhortation to be henceforth more faithful."*

We find abundant evidence of the exercise of this function in the Session minutes of both of our New Wilmington churches. In fact, Mr. William McElwee scarcely put it too strongly in his earlier history of the First Church (1904) when he wrote: "The minutes of the early meetings for long years read like the com-

**Footnote: From THE FORMING OF AN AMERICAN TRADITION by Leonard J. Trinterud. The Westminster Press. Copyright 1949 by W. L. Jenkins. Used by permission.*

bined records of a police magistrate and a detective bureau." For whole decades there is hardly a Session minute that does not include reference to some investigation, citation, trial, admonition, suspension and public restoration. Sometimes the cases dragged on for years. While all this may have had its value in tending to keep the weak and erring in line, it also had its bad side in the encouragement it gave to malicious rumor, tale-bearing, and the expression of personal animosities. Here are some typical excerpts from the Session minutes of the two churches:

Associate Church, April 29, 1842: " .... W. M. appeared before session as having some time since (been) laid aside for the sin of intoxication who confessed his sin and professed his sorrow for the same and was rebuked and restored to church fellowship. W. R. on a common fame of improper conduct of a double sale of a cow and appropriating the calf for his own use without liberty from the owner for which he confessed his sin and sorrow was rebuked before session and restored to communion."

Associate Church, March 13, 1843: " .... A complaint was presented by Mr. T. T. against Mr. R. M. for taking the advantage of him in the sale of a horse which he said was sound and all right but which is worth nothing. A citation was ordered for Mr. R. M. Mr. Patton was apointed to serve the citation .. " At subsequent meetings of Session we read: "Mr. R. M. appeared before session readdy for the issue of his trial...After hearing the parties on both sides and their evidence session agreed that the complaint was not proven and we agree to grant said M. his former privileges."

Associate Church, May 14, 1850: " .... The following cases were tried. Mr. S. T. apeared before session and acknowledged his fault of being at some times disguised with the use of too much spiritous liquors for which he professed his sin and sorrow for the same and was admonished before the session and restored to communion again. Mr. J. G. and Mrs. M. G. his wife apeared before session on a fame of clamosea ("fama clamosa" or noisy rumor--RWG) for which they were charged with the sin of attenuptial (antenuptial) fornication. They brought forward testimony sufficient to prove their innocence .... they were continued in communion of the church."

Associate Reformed Church, May 1855: " .... Miss E. B. moving through her mother expressed a desire for the removal of her suspension from the sealing ordinances of the church. Messrs. McConnell and McLaughry were appointed a committee to call upon and converse with her in regard to the matter... Committee appointed to converse with Miss B. reported that session could not without scandal remove her suspension. Report was adopted." At a later meeting of Session the same year we read: " .... Miss B. renewed her application for restoration to the communion of the church in sealing ordinances. It was resolved that without a fuller confession of guilt in the matter for which she has been suspended and clearer evidence of penitence than she has given her suspension cannot be removed without scandal to the church."

And here is a typical citation or summons, served by the Second (formerly

A. R. P.) Church Session and dated March 11, 1863:

"By order of the Session of the Second U. P. congregation you Mr. I. S. and M. his wife are hereby summoned to appear before the said session and answer to the libel herewith presented in Professor Mehard's room in the College in New Wilmington on the last Friday of March at 1 P. M., New Wilmington, March 11/63 Wm. A. Mehard, Mod.--Libel prepared against I. S. and M. his wife by order of the session of the 2nd U. P. Congregation of New Wilmington: Whereas neglecting of Gospel ordinances is a sin and scandal contrary to the Word of God and to the profession of this church founded thereon, hurtful to the Christian character and injurious to the religion of the Lord Jesus;

It is true that you I. S. and M. his wife are guilty of the matter of scandal above mentioned inasmuch as you have for a long time previous to the date hereof absented yourselves from the ordinances of the Gospel, which charge being found evident and proved against you, you ought to be proceeded against by the censure of the Lord's House according to the nature of your said offense and scandal. Done at New Wilmington March 11/63. Wm. A. Mehard, Mod."

It would be interesting to see what would happen if Sessions exercised similar discipline today....

CHAPTER VIII

Two Parallel Streams Of Congregational Life

The First Church

The Rev. David Imbrie's eminently successful pastorate of 25 years terminated in 1867. During his quarter-century of ministry the First Church gained greatly in stability and strength. Westminster College had also profited by his labors, for he had ridden horseback from farm to farm soliciting financial support for the infant institution, garnering a dollar here and a dollar there with indefatigable zeal.

REV J R MILLER
FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1867-69

First Church lost no time in choosing his successor, and on Sept. 11, 1867, James Russell Miller, a young man of rich intellectual and spiritual gifts, was ordained by Mercer Presbytery and installed as First Church's fourth pastor. Though this young man's ministry here in New Wilmington was only of two years' duration, they were two years of

tremendous growth for First Church; and Mr. Miller's subsequent career was so outstanding that some space deserves to be given to, it here.

Born in 1840 at Frankfort Springs, Beaver County, Pa., James Miller was graduated from Westminster College in 1862. He came from sturdy stock, as may be judged from the fact that his great grandfather at the age of 91 rode 30 miles on horseback from his farm in Washington County to his new one in Beaver County--and lived to be 102! Young James entered Westminster College in 1861 but had such outstanding intellectual endowments that he completed the four years' requirements in two years. He then entered Allegheny Seminary, but the needs of the men fighting in the Civil War claimed his concern, and he enlisted in the Christian Commission, an agency formed by the churches in cooperation with the Federal government to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of the soldiers, on the battlefield, in camp and bivouac, and in the hospital. He rendered such noteworthy service in this capacity that in October, 1863, he was promoted to General Field Agent, a position of great responsibility. He greatly endeared himself to the soldiers and to all his fellow-workers. One Negro mess cook said of him, "Massa Miller is a gentleman from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet." The editor of the Pittsburgh "Gazette" visiting Harper's Ferry in February, 1865, and seeing the quality of his administration and of his personal character wrote to his paper: "The General Field Agent is Mr. J. R. Miller of the United Presbyterian Church, a man of indefatigable industry and fine administrative abilities. A nobler or more generous man we never met; and if we were to relate his deeds of substantial kindness to all around him....our language would be most extravagant."

After the war was over and his duties had been wound up, Mr. Miller returned to Allegheny Seminary, from which he was graduated in the Spring of 1867, and as we have seen, became pastor of New Wilmington's First Church the following Fall. In later years, many were to testify to the uplift they had received from his preaching, including ministers, lawyers, doctors and professors. John T. Faris in his biography of James Russell Miller says of his pulpit ministry that it was characterized by "persuasiveness in tone and message, and earnestness in utterance." During his all-too-brief New Wilmington pastorate two hundred members were added to First Church, 85 of them by profession of their faith. He was tireless in his visitation of one hundred families within a radius of five miles of the church. During this his first pastorate he was unmarried.

James Miller's experience in the service of the Christian Commission, working with chaplains and soldiers of every church background--and many soldiers none--had understandably given him what today we would call an "ecumenical disposition of mind and spirit, and he chafed under the restrictions of the United Presbyterian Church's exclusive psalmody and closed Communion. Since these were part of the Testimony whereby United Presbyterians were distinct from other Presbyterian bodies, and since Mr. Miller could not honestly subscribe to them, he felt that he could no longer honorably remain in the United Presbyterian Church as one of her pastors. He explained his reasons to the Session, and even in the brief record we have of that Session meeting we can read between the lines the genuine grief that was felt at the thought of losing a pastor who had so greatly

endeared himself to the congregation and the community. He was released from the First Church pastorate in the autumn of 1869, though he had no call to another church, and did not receive one till the following May. In the session minutes for Oct. 5, 1969, we Read: "Resolved that our late pastor has an interest in our prayers that God would continue abundantly to bless him in his work and cause him to feel in his heart the power and comfort of the gospel of his divine Master."

Briefly to sum up Mr. Miller's subsequent career: In May, 1870, he was called to the pastorate of the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia--the church which was to become known as the "Wanamaker Church." During his ten years' pastorate the congregation grew from 75 to 1200 members. In 1880 he was chosen for the editorship of all of the curriculum materials and other publications of the Presbyterian Board of Publication, and continued in this capacity throughout many of the years of three successive pastorates, two of them in Philadelphia and one in Rock Island, Illinois. He was the author of no less than 61 devotional books which had an immense popularity both in this country and abroad, and were translated into many languages. In 1881 Westminster College conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. His writings about the deep inner resources of the Christian life were still being read when the author of this history was a young man. He had a rich vein of humor. While he was still working with the Christian Commission during the Civil War he wrote relative to the poor attendance of some of his fellow workers at a field service one wet night: "It is well known that nothing is so apt to injure health as to attend religious meetings on damp and stormy nights." Here is a brief quote from his book "Upper Currents":

> "We should not be content to let a single day pass in which we do not speak some gracious word or do a kindness that will add to the happiness, the hope, or the courage and strength, of another life." And from his "Witnesses for Christ":
>
> "We represent Christ wherever we go. He is not here today in human form, but he sends us in his place. We are to act for him, speak the words of kindness he would speak if he were here, do the deed of love he would do if he were in our place."

It was a boon of Heaven that New Wilmington's First Church had the ministry of this richly endowed young man during the first two years of his ordination.

This time the congregation resolved that no long vacancy should intervene between pastorates, and no time was lost in calling Rev. John McBurney Donaldson to be First Church's fifth pastor. Mr. Donaldson was born in Hickory, Washington County, Pennsylvania, in 1837. He, like his predecessor, was a graduate of Westminster College in the Class of 1859. He attended both Allegheny and Xenia Seminaries, and then was ordained and installed by Butler Presbytery as pastor of Portersville and Mountville. After a four-and-a-half-years pastorate there he began work in New Wilmington in the Spring of 1870, though he was not actually installed here until the following August. His pastorate was all too brief, lasting only a little over four years, for on Thanksgiving Day, November, 1874, he died of typhoid fever, at the age of 37. One of his successors in the First Church Pastorate, Rev. H. G. McVey, wrote of him: "He was a successful laborer, amiable, faithful

and kind, he was highly esteemed by all."

During the period of which we have been writing, shortly after the Civil War, a number of significant developments took place in the life of the 300-member congregation. Emphasis in the operations of the Session began to shift almost imperceptibly from severe discipline to concern for the poor and the unfortunate, and there are many instances on record of special offerings being received for such assistance. "Penny collections," as they were called, were held once a month to augment the Session Fund and for the help of any in the congregation who were in need. In 1872 a Board of Deacons was chosen.

By the time of the Civil War both First and Second Churches had Sabbath Schools, though the introduction of "Sabbath School lessons" was viewed with concern by some who feared that they would contribute to the neglect of parental teaching in the home and the de-emphasizing of the importance of children's learning the Westminster Shorter Catechism. We know that both congregations had Women's Missionary Societies by 1878, for the records of Mercer Presbytery show that societies of both congregations helped to form the Mercer Presbyterial.

The use of Communion tokens for admission to the Lord's Table was discontinued by First Church in 1873. The year before, the new revised version of the metrical Psalms was introduced. In 1877 a "choir" is referred to, so prejudice against its services had apparently died out. In a Session minute dated Oct. 1, 1878 we read that a committee of elders was appointed "to see and converse with the members of the congregation whom report says were on a certain evening engaged in promiscuous dancing."

Following the denominational union in 1858, Mercer Presbytery was founded in 1859 of the two presbyteries of Lawrence and Shenango. In its very first meeting the new presbytery branded the manufacture of liquors as immoral and required any members of its constituent congregations who were engaged in selling it to abandon the trade; this action to be enforced by the various church Sessions. General Assembly was requested to take a similar position.

Following the death of Mr. Donaldson, two years elapsed before another pastor was called to First Church. At length the lot fell upon one John Henry Gibson, another young man just out of Seminary. Mr. Gibson was born in Oxford, Chester County, Pa. He too was a Westminster graduate, Class of '72. He was ordained by Mercer Presbytery and installed pastor of First New Wilmington on Dec. 14, 1876. His pastorate of three and a half years was an unhappy one. For reasons which are only hinted at in the Session and congregational records and are tantalizingly vague, it proved to be a time of severe dissension in the congregation. Mr. McVey, who followed Mr. Gibson in the First Church pastorate, wrote only ten years later: "Even at this short distance nobody knows the real cause of the trouble. There were factions in existence probably and it required but little to blow the smothered embers into a blazing flame of personalities." Mr. William McElwee, Jr., First Church's Clerk of Session at the turn of the century, writes in these picturesque terms of the Gibson period: "Mr. Gibson came to tend this flock, and like the true shepherd he would fain have gathered the lambs to his bo-

som. But lo, the foul winds blew--and the wool flew--and Mr. Gibson's lambkins stood before him a bunch of horny goats, unusually fit for the Church Militant but as to the Church Triumphant I have not had access to the records." One result of this unhappy time of dissension was the transfer of about sixty members to Second Church (almost exactly the same number of members who had left Second Church for First Church several years before when overtures from First Church toward a possible union of the two congregations had been turned down by Second Church). Four members of the Session were among those who left. The entire Board of Trustees resigned. The pastor's salary was reduced from $1200 to $1000; and though the promise was made that the figure would be raised again, the promise was not kept--a fact to which Mr. Gibson called the congregation's attention at the annual meeting on March 9, 1880. His resignation was effective on April 1 of that year after a brief and difficult pastorate, and he left a congregation reduced in numbers and energy.

One important action was taken during Mr. Gibson's pastorate that probably deserves some space in this chronicle. We read that on March 24, 1877: "A conjoined meeting of the 1st U. P. congregation and citizens of vicinity convened in 1st Church to consider the propriety of establishing a cemetery at the place of the 'Ceceder Burying Ground.' .... On motion the 'Ceceder Graveyard' was ceded by the 1st U. P. congregation of New Wilmington for the use of a cemetery association on condition that five acres be added to it for the same purpose. On motion a committee of five was appointed to ascertain if five acres of land can be bought from Mr. Millar contiguous to said 'Graveyard,' for cemetery purposes, and to draft a constitution and by-laws of the cemetery association at next meeting. By motion a committee of six was appointed from various parts of the vicinity to test by some means the feeling of the people in regard to establishing a cemetery, and to circulate the report of our present action." This was the beginning of Fair Oaks Cemetery as we know it today.

REV. H.G. McVEY
FIRST CHURCH
1881 - 1894

First Church's next pastor came to a church which, to use his own words, "was trembling and tottering because of the crushing influence of contention through which it had passed." The Rev. Hugh Given McVey was born in Rix Mills, Ohio, in 1848. He was graduated from Muskingum College and Allegheny Seminary, was stated supply for several months in Indianapolis, Indiana, and then for four years served as pastor of the Second Church, Washington, Iowa. He began work in New Wilmington the first Sabbath in January, 1881, though he was not installed until March 29. At once conditions in First Church began to take a turn for the better, and during his pastorate of almost fourteen years old wounds were healed, spiritual health restored, and splendid growth recorded for old First Church. Within the first five years of Mr. McVey's ministry, 124

members were added to the congregational roll, and over twenty per cent of the church's contributions were given to benevolence. In 1887 Mr. McVey wrote a brief history of the First Church--probably at the request of the Session or of the congregation; and this was printed by the recently-launched New Wilmington Globe in pamphlet form and has been of great value to the writer of this present history. In Mr. McElwee's later history (1904) we read:

REV. J.D. BARR
FIRST CHURCH
1894 - 1902

"Mr. McVey's pastorate was very successful. He found a little flock still bleeding from the wounds made by fierce contention. He helped to heal these wounds ..... Mr. McVey was a very good preacher, but he was not perfect. He lacked modulation of voice and brevity of brief; but he was a good man and he did a good work." He was released on Dec. 31, 1893, to accept a call to Lawrence, Massachusetts.

We shall look at one more pastorate of First Church--the eighth--and then "back-track" to survey the post-Civil War fortunes of Second Church for the same period. The eighth pastor of First Church was the Rev. James Deuruelle Barr. He was born in Sialkot, India (now West Pakistan), in 1865 of missionary parents, his father, Rev. J. S. Barr, having been one of the first United Presbyterian missionaries to go to India, where he became teacher in the theological seminary in Sialkot. Young J. D. Barr was a Westminster College graduate, Class of '88. After teaching for two years in Argyle, New York, he joined the faculty of his Alma Mater as professor of Latin. During his two years in this capacity the call to enter the ministry could not be resisted, and he entered Allegheny Theological Seminary. Following his graduation he was called to the pastorate of New Wilmington's First Church, where he had worshipped as a college student, and was ordained and installed on Nov. 26, 1894. The pastorate of this greatly beloved young man was all too brief, lasting but eight years-until Sept. 15, 1902. After a four-year pastorate in Bloomington, Indiana, he returned to Westminster College, where he taught Greek until 1923; after which he served until his death in 1928 as pastor of the neighboring Lebanon congregation in Greenfield.

There are few living today who have personal recollections of Mr. Barr's pastorate but there are still a number of Westminster alumni who remember him as a stimulating teacher of Greek and a man of rich and engaging personality. During the eight years of his First Church ministry he greatly endeared himself to the congregation. Mr. McElwee's 1904 history makes some interesting comments on him: "Rev. Barr was the sweetest singer who ever crossed the threshold of this church, an able preacher who wrote sermons and preached the sermons that he wrote in the most pleasing, earnest, impressive and conscienteous manner. A

noble son of a noble father, he has left to us no memory of unkind word or act, and no matter where the Good Spirit's hand shall lead him, he shall have the esteem of this whole people .... But Mr. Barr had his failings. When it came to kissing babies he was simply no use. He had no wife, and it is utterly impossible for a minister to know the news in his congregation without one."

Having followed the fortunes of First Church into the beginning of the Twentieth Century, we shall now turn back to the Second Church, which through all the period we have been surveying had been running its own parallel course less than half a mile away.

As we noted in Chapter V, Dr. Mehard's pastorate lasted twenty years: from 1852 to 1872. In 1872 at his request Presbytery released him from his New Wilmington charge that he might give more time to his teaching of mathematics in Westminster College. He still retained his East Brook pastorate. During his twenty years of good service to Second Church there was one interlude of special interest. When Lee's army crossed into Maryland and threatened Pennsylvania in 1862 a reserve company of Westminster students called the Westminster Guards was summoned into service and with Professor-Pastor Mehard as chaplain, travelled by farm wagons, canal boats, river boats, box cars and on foot to a camp within a few miles of the spot where the bloody battle of Antietam was raging. In his, centennial history of Westminster College, Mr. Paul Gamble writes: "Although not involved in front-line fighting, the Westminster boys had plenty of excitement, what with night alarms, hurried marches, tentless bivouacs, and the capture of several Confederate soldiers." They returned to New Wilmington after two weeks of war: the students to resume their classes, their chaplain his duties both instructional and pastoral.

After Dr. Mehard's resignation in 1872 the Second Church pulpit was filled for two years by various members of the College faculty who were ordained ministers. In 1874 Westminster's President, the Rev. Eliakim Tupper Jeffers, assumed the pastorate of New Wilmington's Second Church. The Reverend Mr. Jeffers was born In Nova Scotia in 1841, was graduated from Jefferson College, in Canonsburg, Pa., in 1862, had attended Allegheny and Princeton Seminaries, and had served as pastor of the Oxford, Pa., Church from 1865 till he assumed his duties as college president at the age of 31--at which time his alma mater (now Washington and Jefferson College) conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. According to the college history previously quoted he was described at that time as "a good-looking man that dressed with meticulous taste, a polished gentleman, a brilliant scholar, a man of excellent character and winning personality."

However, as might have been foreseen, this arrangement proved highly unsatisfactory both to Dr. Jeffers and to the congregation; for the able college president was unable to give as much time to his pastoral duties as the situation required, and the congregation was unable to prosper without the full-time services of a pastor. Often the pulpit had to be supplied by other ordained members of the college faculty, and there was little time for Dr. Jeffers to engage in a house to house ministry to the congregation. As we have noted in an earlier chapter, a considerable number of the congregation, disappointed at the rejection of overtures

from First Church to consider a uniting of the two congregations, had shown their dissatisfaction by transferring to First Church, thus greatly weakening the so-called "college church." The financial situation became so stringent that Second Church sold its property at the corner where the present church stands, and the tiny brick building in which it had worshipped (which was converted into a store), and worshipped in the college chapel until the mid-1880's.

REV. E.T. JEFFERS
SECOND CHURCH
1874 - 1883

President Jeffers resigned his pastoral charge in 1883, and recognizing its imperative need to secure a full-time pastor, the congregation succeeded in calling Rev. J. A. Kennedy in 1884. James Armstrong Kennedy was born in Harrison, Iowa, in 1848; was graduated from Monmouth College in 1873; attended Xenia Seminary. Following his graduation he served as county superintendent of schools for two years, during which interval he wrote "A Manual and Course of Studies for Common Schools." After a five-year pastorate in Madison, Indiana, he came to New Wilmington, and remained as pastor of Second Church until April of 1891, a little over seven years. Immediately the congregation began to take on new life. Its numbers were greatly increased by defections from First Church during the Rev. Mr. Gibson's unhappy ministry there (see above). By heroic financial effort it was enabled to buy back the property it had sold (the site of the present church), and to tear down the building on it and build a new brick church, complete with tower and steeple. It is important to note that this structure, erected in 1886, forms the "core" of our present church edifice, though so radically altered in 1924 by its stone facing, its changes of interior floor plan and entrances, and the removal of its tower that it is almost completely unrecognizable today in terms of its 1886 origin.

During this period Second Church maintained its strong ties with Westminster College. Most of the faculty were closely associated with the congregation among them, Rev. John Edgar (English and Latin), Prof. J. B. Cummings (Science), Prof. Margaret McLaughry (English) and Prof. Morgan Barnes (Greek).

Under the impetus of the new Christian Endeavor movement initiated by the Rev. Francis E. Clark ("Father Endeavor" Clark), Second Church organized a Christian Endeavor Society in 1887. This is the earliest record we have of an organized youth program in either of the two churches. In 1886 Mr. James D. Barr, then a student in the college, and later to become a member of the faculty and also pastor of First Church (see above), was asked by Second Church Session to assume leadership of the choir. In 1888 the congregation was divided into seven districts--four in the village and three in the country; and the Elders were urged to be diligent in their care and supervision of the districts assigned to them. In the same year the pastor asked the Session to give him several weeks' leave of

REV. E.N. McELREE
SECOND CHURCH
1892 - 1907

absence for the purpose of special study, and the Session approved--an action which gives these ancient records quite a modern touch! In the Session Minutes of May 12, 1890 we read: "Pastor reported on party he was to see in regard to violation of our principle on psalmody and he was directed to defer action and make haste slowly. The action of pastor and superintendent in procuring copies of Bible Songs for use in the Sabbath School was approved."

On April 8, 1891, Mr. Kennedy was released to accept a call to the First Church in Philadelphia, and a little over a year later he was succeeded by the Rev. E. N. McElree, who became Second Church's fourth pastor. Edward Newton McElree was born in Harrisville, Pa., in 1838. He was a member of Westminster's Class of '58 and was graduated from Allegheny Seminary. His New Wilmington charge was his fifth pastorate, and in the same year in which he began work here he was honored with the Doctor of Divinity degree by Westminster College. His pastorate continued till 1907, when ill health compelled him to resign; and he remained a resident in the community until his death in 1916. Had he lived only three years longer, he would have witnessed the merger of the two United Presbyterian congregations of New Wilmington into one strong church.

Dr. McElree was a forceful preacher of vigorous conservative convictions. During the celebrated "organ controversy" which raged in the denomination in the early 1880's and almost rent the U. P. Church in two, he was one of the "anti-instrument" group; and though the General Assembly of 1882 permitted the introduction of instrumental music in divine worship, it is significant that not until 1906 would the Second Church admit an organ into its sanctuary. (Two years earlier, the young people had petitioned the Session for permission to have an organ in their own worship services, and permission was granted, and a harmless-looking little melodeon was installed in their place of worship. This apparently proved to be "the thin edge of the wedge."). There were certain restrictions placed by the Session--probably under the influence of Dr. McElree--on the use of the organ in the sanctuary and also upon the performance of the choir, which was under the direction of Miss Nettie Alexander; for we read in the Session minutes for Jan. 16, 1906: "Resolved, that it is the judgment of this Session that no service of praise should be employed in which the congregation is not asked and expected to participate. On motion the clerk was directed to give a copy of these resolutions to the choir and one to the pastor to read to the congregation." In other words, no anthems permitted! Incidentally, it is interesting to note in the same minutes that a special offering was designated to be received on the first Sabbath of August "for

the benefit of the California congregations that have suffered from the earthquake and fire."

In 1903 the Session accepted the offer of the Ladies' Missionary Society to present to the congregation a set of individual Communion cups, and presumably from that time on the congregation discontinued the use of the common cup; though it is not evident when the communicants began to receive the sacrament in their pews instead of at the long tables set up for the purpose.

It was in the next-to-the-last year of Dr. McElree's pastorate of Second Church and in the mid-term of Mr. R. W. Thompson's pastorate of First Church (to which we shall come in the next chapter)--in other words, in 1906--that an event took place which was to have lasting effect upon the two churches, the community of New Wilmington, and ultimately upon the entire denomination: namely, the founding of the New Wilmington Missionary Conference. From its very beginnings, that tremendously significant development, with its accent on youth and its concern for world evangelization, has had the cooperation and vital assistance of the two United Presbyterian churches of the community, and of the one church which resulted from the merger of the two. In return, the Conference has made rich contribution to the spiritual life of the local church.

One incident during Dr. McElree's New Wilmington ministry is of special interest. Prof. Morgan Barnes was a popular teacher of Greek in the college. He had been received into the membership of Second Church in 1896 (on the same day that Harold S. Ashenhurst, later to become the young editor of The Globe, was received). Prof. Barnes' name is well known to Westminster students today as the author of the college's Alma Mater song. In March, 1902, a letter from Mr. Barnes was read in Session meeting, requesting--well, let's quote it in the professor's own words: "I hereby respectfully request that the formal connection which exists between the Second United Presbyterian Church of New Wilmington and myself be officially severed and that a duly signed statement to this effect be furnished me." Session responded by laying the matter of the requested action on the table, since no reason for the request had been given, until Mr. Barnes either appeared before session in person or wrote giving his reasons. This action was communicated to Mr. Barnes. There being no response from the latter, Session wrote Him again, stating that there were rumors of Mr. Barnes' denial of belief in the doctrines of the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures and the vicarious atonement of Christ, and requesting him to affirm or deny the truth of these rumors. In reply the Session received the following statement of Mr. Barnes' creed:

> "I believe in the living God, Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible. I strive to live with him as the child of his love and in my every need to turn to him in faith and trust.
>
> I believe in Jesus Christ, the Supreme Revelation of that life of love which is the will of God and the Salvation of Man, and I strive to follow him and to make the spirit of his life my guide.
>
> I believe in the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of his followers as the divine power for the redemption of the world from sin and the establish-

ment of the Kingdom of God.

I believe in the Bible as an inspired record of the revelation of God, in Nature, History and the human soul.

SECOND CHURCH BUILDING
ERECTED 1886
(the "core" of the present building)

Preferring to be estimated by my beliefs rather than disbeliefs, by positive affirmations rather than by negations, I most respectfully submit this final communication."

Not satisfied with this statement and not meeting with any further response to its repeated plea that Mr. Barnes come and discuss the whole matter with the Elders, the Session on Oct. 30, 1902, acceded to his request and severed his connection with Second Church. The whole matter created something of a flurry in the community, particularly in its academic portion. It seems probable that today Prof. Barnes' "credo" would find acceptance in most Protestant churches.

CHAPTER IX

Two Streams Of Church Life Converge

We come now to a period of immense significance in the life of the two con gregations whose story we have been following: a period in which two streams running so closely parallel yet continually moving ever so slightly toward eac other, were to merge and become one "river of life." Perhaps there is somethin symbolic of the gradual rapprochement of all types of Presbyterianism in the fac that in 1899--exactly a century after its founding--the Neshannock Presbyteria Church moved into the village and occupied its handsome new building on wh was then called Water Street but now Neshannock Avenue. This move was n made without a struggle. Indeed, dissension over the projected move almost spl the congregation in two. But the move was made and the wounds were healed.

REV. R.W. THOMPSON
FIRST CHURCH
1903 - 1909

We return now to the continuing story of New Wilmington's First U. P. Church, still in its sturdy and substantial old building on Church Street. In 1904 the congregation spent several days in observing what was then believed to be its centennial (though the actual organization did not take form until 1809). The new pastor, Rev. R. W. Thompson, who had been called after Dr. Barr's resignation, preached in the Sabbath morning centennial service, and in the evening the speaker was Mrs. H. C. Campbell, leader in the women's work of the denomination. On Monday evening congratulatory messages were brought by Rev. G. W. Gealey of New Bedford and Dr. Robert Gracey Ferguson of Westminster College. Tuesday was "History Day", and a history of First Church was read by the clerk of Session, Attorney William McElwee--a history which has proved immensely useful to the present writer. The history of the Session was given by William Whitla; of the Sabbath School by J. J. Ashenhurst; of the Women's Missionary Society by Mrs. William Poppino; and of the Young People's Christian Union by Miss Rosa Elliott. At the congregational dinner Mr. Joseph McNaugher led in an enthusiastic song fest. In the evening fraternal greetings were brought by Rev. S. A. Kirkbride, pastor of Neshannock Presbyterian Church; letters from former pastors--J. R. Miller, J. H. Gibson, J. D. Barr--were read, and greetings by ministerial sons of the congregation: K. W. McFarland, J. H. Spencer, J. J. Imbrie. The address of the evening was made by Rev. H. G. McVey, then of Jamestown, Pa. There were other features of the centennial celebration "too numerous to mention."

Robert Wilson Thompson, First Church's ninth pastor, came to New Wilmington at the age of 33. He was a graduate of Monmouth College and Xenia Seminary. In the later years of his ministry he was one of the most respected leaders of the denomination, and was elected Moderator of the General Assembly in 1936. His six-year pastorate with First Church was one of stability and growth for the congregation--not least because he had the fine gift of appreciation and praise for all good work done.

A quick rundown of some of the significant developments in the life of "Old First" during Mr. Thompson's pastorate reveals the following: In 1903 the congregation was divided by the Session into districts, with one Elder responsible for each district. In the same year, Communion cups began to be used in the sacrament. In 1904 a comprehensive pastoral letter was sent to every family in the congregation, covering all phases of Christian dedication and churchly responsibility. The envelope system was adopted for pledges and contributions. In 1906 the congregation gave a total (exclusive of Sabbath School and Women's Work contributions) of $1799, of which $1000 was the pastor's salary and $535 designated for missions. The report of the Young People's Society for 1907 makes interesting reading:

"The Young People's Society of the First Church has had a prosperous year. Our membership is almost one hundred and the attendance at the meetings is fully that or more .... The meetings have always been bright and interesting and the spiritual tone has been very good. In the Spring six weeks were spent in Special missionary meetings. These entailed a vast amount of work on the committees, but every one in the Society did what was asked of them, and the meetings were carried through with unusual spirit and interest...." Many Westminster College students were identified with this society.

Session Minutes reveal the progressive decline during this period of the use of disciplinary measures directed toward the erring; though during the pastorate of Rev. P. B. Logan, Mr. Thompson's successor, there was one outstanding disciplinary case in 1911 the full recording of which occupies 15 pages of Session Minutes!

In 1908 First Church invited Dr. W. W. Orr of North Carolina to come to New Wilmington for two weeks of evangelistic preaching. Dr. Orr had been conspicuously successful in evangelistic preaching and had resigned his pastorate of the Tabernacle A. R. P. Church of Charlotte, N. C. to give his whole time to that ministry. His two weeks' services in New Wilmington were memorable. They were shared in by Second Church and Neshannock Presbyterian, and resulted in a large ingathering in all three congregations. (The writer of this history can testify to Dr. Orr's powerful preaching, for it made a profound impression on him as a lad of 14 when Dr. Orr served a like ministry in his own home church in 1912). But as New Wilmington congregations listened to the North Carolina evangelist, how few of them could have guessed that his son, Will W. Orr junior, was to become in due time the ninth president of Westminster College!

Little by little the two United Presbyterian churches were coming closer to each other. In 1909 the Session of First Church invited Second Church to share in a Sabbath morning Communion service. The invitation was accepted, the Elders of both congregations administering the sacrament as one body.

In 1909 Mr. Thompson resigned to accept a call to Pittsburg, Kansas. Session adopted strong minutes of appreciation for his six-year ministry. The congregation then called Rev. P. B. Logan, who assumed the First Church pastorate on April 6, 1910. Preston Brackenridge Logan was born in Missouri in 1870; had attended both Monmouth and Erskine College, and was graduated from Allegheny Seminary. For a two-year period in 1901-2 he had served as stated supply for the Rich Hill congregation, a near neighbor of New Wilmington. He was something of a church historian. During a pastorate in Oxford, Pa., he wrote an attractive brochure in celebration of the 150th anniversary of that pioneer congregation; and when he was moderator of Mercer Presbytery he penned a history of the presbytery, including a brief account of each congregation in it. He was able and well liked, as this writer has been able to ascertain from inquiries of some of the "old-timers" of "our" congregation who still remember him.

The year 1915 was one in which there was much interest among the various Presbyterian and Reformed bodies in the nation in possible organic union. The U. P. General Assembly sent down in overture to the various Sessions the following

two questions to be voted on: (1) Is it desired that the General Assembly instruct a Committee on Union to negotiate and submit to a subsequent General Assembly a Basis of Union with the Churches of the Presbyterian and Reformed family? (2) Shall the United Presbyterian Church continue its separate and independent existence on the basis of its accepted faith and usages? On the first question First Church Session voted: 5 ayes, 1 nay; on the second, 2 ayes, 4 nays. (It is interesting to note that at the same time the Session of Second Church voted all negative on Question 1, and all affirmative on Question 2--something of a paradox in view of the fact that Second Church had been Associate Reformed, itself a product of union).

In 1911 Mr. Merle Minteer was given authority "to organize a choral class" and to be "given charge of all the music of the church except the Sabbath School"; and also was voted "authority to purchase sheet music to the value of five dollars"!!! In the Minutes of the congregation we learn that the problem of heating the old 1856 building was becoming acute, and in a number of respects the historic structure was giving troublesome evidences of its antiquity. Again and again during this period the question was raised about repairs and the trustees empowered to proceed; but only minor repairs were made, because the matter of possible union with Second Church loomed ever larger in the background of the congregation's thinking. With America's entry into the First World War in 1917 and the consequent stringency of the times this possibility seemed highly desirable in spite of the strong ties of sentiment. When this action seemed almost inevitable, Rev. Mr. Logan tendered his resignation in order to facilitate the union. (We shall see later that Rev. A. A. Graham of Second Church took the same action and for the same reason). A congregational meeting was called for Feb. 12, 1919, to answer the following questions: (1) Do you favor a union with the Second United Presbyterian Church of this place? The vote was: Ayes, 94; Nays, 71. (2) Will you oppose a union with said Second Church! Ayes, 24; Nays, 136. (3) If a union is not effected are you willing to increase your activity in church work and your contributions to the funds of the church? Ayes, 84; Nays, 53. In his Minutes, Mr. McElwee, Clerk of Sessions, wryly notes: "On examination it was found that one of those voting 'yes' on the second question also stated his intention to join the Neshannock Presbyterian Church without regard to the result of the vote and 12 others who had voted 'yes' on the same question had not contributed to nor been present at the church for more than one year." One is tempted to remark, "How typical!"

REV. R.G. FERGUSON
President of Westminster College,
1884-1906,
and frequently moderator of both First and Second Church sessions during pulpit vacancies

A committee of five was authorized to confer with a like committee of Second Church to formulate a basis of union to submit to the two congregations. First Church's Committee was: William McElwee, Jr., Howell T. Getty, Francis C. Hoagland, Frances

REV. A.A. GRAHAM
SECOND CHURCH
1908 - 1918

E. Barr, and Inez A. Hope.

So now for the last time we return to Second Church. With Dr. McElree's retirement from the pastorate in 1907 because of failing health the pulpit was vacant for several months, during which Westminster's "grand old man," President Robert Gracey Ferguson, served as moderator of the Session. In 1908 the congregation called Rev. A. A. Graham, then serving in Cambridge, New York. Andrew Allen Graham was born in 1868 at West Fairfield, Westmoreland County, Pa. He was graduated from Westminster College in 1891 and from Allegheny Seminary in 1894. Following his graduation he had gone as a home missionary to the little community of Oakesdale in the State of Washington. In frame he was spare and angular. He was an effective preacher, and had that useful quality, a good sense of humor.

Following the Orr evangelistic meetings noted above, Second Church also received a substantial accession of members, particularly among the young people of the congregation and the community. In 1909 the congregation began to receive Communion in the pews. In 1912 at the request of the celebrated missionary Dr. Charles Watson, Session granted permission to the New Wilmington Missionary Conference to receive the sacrament at an evening service in the church. Early in 1913 Rev. Mr. Graham was granted a leave of absence at the request of Westminster College to canvass for funds for the college's endowment fund. His efforts were so successful that in June of the same year Westminster College again requested his services for an indefinite time, the College Board promising to supply the pulpit during the interval; and again the request was granted. The use of the church was given to the college for the inauguration of Dr. W. Charles Wallace as sixth president of Westminster. In January, 1918, Dr. Ralph Atkinson, formerly pastor of the First Church, Seattle, Washington, but now about to enter a career as an evangelist, was invited by the pastor and Session of Second Church to come to New Wilmington for two weeks of evangelistic services. There were no notable results from Dr. Atkinson's ministry, though there may well have been a deepening of the congregation's spiritual life. In 1918 Mr. Graham was once more given leave of absence for the purpose of assisting in the campaign of the denomination's young people to raise money to endow a Chair of Bible in the United Presbyterian Church's colleges: Westminster, Muskingum, Monmouth, Tarkio and Cooper Memorial (later, Sterling). Soon after this, Mr. Graham announced his intention of resign, in order to facilitate possible union with First Church, and his resignation was accepted.

The Session of Second Church parallelled the action of its opposite number in First Church by appointing a committee to represent the congregation in helping to draw up a basis of union for the two congregations. The committee consisted of: J. S. Coulter, S. J. Thompson, Anna Elliott, Nettie Shaffer, and R.

S. Mercer.

The joint committee did its work superlatively well. It was greatly assisted in its labors by the keen legal mind of William McElwee, First Church's clerk of Session and member of the committee. In the Minutes of March 13, 1919, we read: :'Moved by Prof. J. M. Shaffer, seconded by R. J. Crawford, that the report of the joint committee of the First United Presbyterian Church of New Wilmington and the Second United Presbyterian Church of New Wilmington appointed to formulate a basis of union between the two congregations, which has been submitted and read, be approved, and that the Session of the Second United Presbyterian Church of New Wilmington be directed to join with the Session of the First United Presbyterian Church of New Wilmington in presenting the same to the Presbytery of Mercer together with a request to said presbytery to unite the two congregations on the basis stipulated in said report. Motion carried." In such unemotional words are decisive actions recorded!

Presbytery unhesitatingly granted the request, and the two churches became "The New Wilmington United Presbyterian Church" by official action on March 24, 1919. Presbytery appointed a commission composed of one minister and two ruling Elders to meet with the united congregation on April 13 at 11 a. m. "at the place of worship heretofore occupied by the Second United Presbyterian Church, for the purpose of having the members of said congregation take the covenant of fidelity to the united congregation, which covenant shall be taken by standing and with right hand uplifted answering affirmatively the following question: 'Do you solemnly covenant with each other and with God that you will walk together as an organized congregation, on the principles of the faith and order of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, and that you will seek the peace, purity, and enlargement of the whole body'?

Scrupulous attention was given in the Basis of Union to the utmost fairness in dealing with the organizations and assets of both congregations. Provision was made for the Sessions and boards of trustees of the two churches simply to combine until such time as they should designate for new elections. The most careful attention was accorded even to the teaching personnel of the Sabbath School and the officerships of the Young People's Christian Union. The paragraph devoted to the Choir is particularly interesting as suggestive of the spirit of the entire union enterprise:

> "We are admonished by the Directory for Worship that the whole congregation should join in the praise service and take part in the singing. In order that the praise service may be made as attractive as possible, congregations have generally found it to be true that it is necessary to select from among the members those that have special talent along this particular line. Experience has taught that the proper development of those who are the chosen leaders of the singing requires the service of some person or persons especially gifted in the training of musicians and familiar with the harmony of voices. This Committee has given the matter of the praise service and the selection of a Choir exceptionally careful consideration and is convinced that there will be an abundance of talent in the united

congregation for the formation of an excellent choir which will be a credit to the congregation and an honor to themselves. On the solicitation of the Committee, Professor W. W. Campbell, head of the Music Department of Westminster College, has very generously offered to donate his services to the training of the choir of the united congregation for an indefinite period of time, which shall be long enough to assure the proper training of the choir of the united congregation. His experience and training along these particular lines having been such as to recommend him to the Committee for this work, when the congregations are united the selection of the members of the choir from among the members of the united congregation and the training of the same shall be entirely in his hands until otherwise determined by the Session."

The basis of union provided that the chairs which had heretofore been the means of seating in the Second Church were to be removed and the First Church pews installed in their place, since it had been agreed that Second Church's structure at the corner of Market and Maple Streets was to serve the united congregation, it being much the more modern of the two church edifices. While these adjustments were taking place, for the interval until Second Church was ready for its new congregation the people worshipped together in First Church's 63-year-old sanctuary.

At long last the two streams had converged: Associate, Associate Reformed, United Presbyterian both, and the New Wilmington United Presbyterian Church had come into being. The next business in hand was the securing of a pastor -- a pastor who with divine help would make the union a spiritual reality as well as a physical fact. But that must wait till the next chapter.

CHAPTER X
A United Church Moves Forward

The two congregations merging to form the New Wilmington United Presbyterian Church were almost equal in number of members: First Church bringing 243 into the union, Second Church 280. Together they constituted a very substantial organization. The merger was not consummated however without some genuine sacrifice and heartache. First Church had to give up the building that had enshrined sacred associations for its people during more than sixty years. There had been considerable rivalry between the two congregations, strengthened by the fact that they had owed their origins to two slightly different denominations. There had been some competition for members. They had vied with each other in missionary interest and giving. First Church had felt some jealousy of Second Church's closer relation to the College; and Second Church of First Church's longer history in the community. What was needed now was the kind of spiritual leadership which would in the months and years ahead create a genuine unity of spirit and inspire a high morale.

This leadership was found in the person of the Rev. J. Ralph Neale, whose

26-year pastorate, extending from 1920 to 1946, made a tremendous contribution, under God, to the consolidating and strengthening of the church we love. Mr. Neale was born in Birmingham, Ohio, in 1885. He was graduated from Muskingum College and Xenia Seminary, and had a three-year pastorate in Piqua, Ohio, and war service in the YMCA, before coming to New Wilmington. He began his ministry here on Easter Sunday, 1920, and from the printed bulletin which still survives we learn that the new pastor preached on the theme, "Life Forevermore"; there were two anthems by the choir; the congregation sang the 24th and 72nd Psalms. The members of Session at that time were Messrs. Robert Mercer, Howell Getty, Joseph Martin, F. M. Hutchison, John Walker, John Houston, (Dr.) W. L. Smith, William McElwee, (Prof.) J. M. Shafer, Floyd McNair, and George Hover. The trustees were Messrs. James Coulter, Stewart McCreary, Rankin Johnston, John Wright, G. E. Thompson, James Stewart, James Patterson, John Wilson, and Charles Minteer. Superintendent of the Sabbath School was Prof. Shafer; Miss Margaret McLaughry was president of the Ladies' Missionary Society and Mrs. J. G. Patterson president of the Young Ladies' Missionary Society.

REV. J.R. NEALE
1920 - 1946

One of the important factors in serving to consolidate the spirit and energies of the congregation was the New World Movement, a denominationwide effort toward spiritual renewal and financial advance following the conclusion of the First World War (the only world war up to that time, and with no remotest dream that there would be an even more disastrous second twenty years later). Attempting to capitalize on the idealism released by the war after its conclusion in 1919, the United Presbyterian Church sought 100,000 intercessors, an increase in membership of twelve per cent, and the raising of sixteen million dollars, for expanding the Church's at work at home and abroad. The New Wilmington congregation entered this campaign with great enthusiasm, and during the five-year period of its duration contributed $47,000--a truly magnificent response, for which it received high commendation from the national leaders of the movement. One incentive toward this splendid effort was the promise that out of the total funds received by the movement the New Wilmington Church would be given substantial aid toward the imperative restructuring and expanding of its building, which was proving quite inadequate for the united congregation.

As soon as the congregation was assured of a pastor, it began to consider the matter of either a new church building or a radical remodeling and enlarging of its present house of worship, which, as we have seen, was erected in 1886 for a much smaller congregation. Mr. Robert Eckles, a New Castle architect, submitted

a plan for the radical remodeling of the building now occupied by the recently doubled congregation, together with specifications for the adding of a "wing" to the southward, and with some minor modifications this plan was adopted. It called for the removal of the bell-tower (which had never had a bell in it!), a completely altered floor plan for the sancturary, new entrances, new windows (some of them to be memorial windows), and the facing of the former red brick walls with native stone, to tie in with the stone construction of the new South Wing. The cost of construction was estimated at $61,700. Some of the membership were frightened at the thought of this prospective outlay, and warned that "our children and our children's children will be paying this debt." Courage and faith prevailed, however, and even before the goal of its subscription to the New World Movement had been attained, the new financial obligation was incurred. True to its promise of material assistance, the United Presbyterian Board of Church Extension made a grant to the congregation of $31,000. recognizing not only the New Wilmington church's valiant effort in support of the New World Movement but also its extraordinary record in sending out sons and daughters of the congregation into the ministry and the mission field, and its strategic relationship with Westminster College. The remainder of the financing was achieved by borrowing and by sacrificial subscriptions. Fifty thousand dollars was received by the sale of bonds bearing six per cent interest.

During the interval of building, in 1924-25, the congregation accepted the invitation of the College to worship in the College Chapel. At length vision, courage and sacrifice came to their fruition, and in the two-week period from Sept. 20 to Oct. 4, 1925, there was an inspiring dedication program including Community Night, Westminster College Night, a week of special evangelistic services under the preaching of Dr. John Robertson of Glasgow, Scotland, a Homecoming Day, the entertainment of Synod, and a dedication of the fine new Moller pipe organ which had been secured by subscription and some generous benefactions under the leadership of Organ Committee chairman Dr. Elizabeth McLaughry. This joyous dedication period was one of the hilltop experiences of the congregation's life. And the handsome building at the corner of Market and Maple, now splendidly qualified to serve a growing congregation and a rapidly increasing student body in the neighboring College, was one in which both church and community took a pardonable pride.

In 1922 the house on S. Market Street which had been serving for some years as a manse was sold and the trustees were directed to purchase a new one. The following year the old First Church property was sold to the New Wilmington School District for $2500 and the money applied to the cost of the manse, which was bought from Dr. Osborne Crowe and was an attractive and substantial house on a broad lot at the corner of Vine and Park Streets. It continued to serve as the church's manse until the summer of 1963, when it was bought by Dr. Graves on his retirement from the New Wilmington pastorate and is his residence at the present time; for Dr. Graves' successors preferred other housing arrangements.

With the spirit of expansion and progress in the very air, the congregation made generous provision for its ministry of music, and in 1924 $1500 was writ-

ten into the annual budget for this purpose--a generous provision for those days. Later, as a financial pinch began to be felt there was some feeling that this amount was out of proportion to the capacities of the congregation, and the figure was reduced to $500. However, by 1928 the budget for music was upped to $1000, to be allotted as follows: $416 to the organist, $416 to the choir director, $100 to soloists, and $68 for music. But under the devastating effects of the Great Depression it was voted in 1934 to reduce the entire church budget across the board by 20 per cent, With the exception of Dr. Neale's salary, which was $3000. Two years before, in 1932, the pastor had offered to take a 15 per cent reduction in salary, but the congregation refused to do this.

On the morning of Jan. 24, 1927, "Old Main," Westminster College's central structure, was completely destroyed by fire. Immediately the church came to the rescue. We read in the Minutes of Session dated Jan. 30, 1927:

> "Moved by Houston, seconded by Braham, that the use of the church building be offered to Westminster College during the need thereof by the college, subject only to such restrictions as may be expressed by the Session. Carried."
>
> "Moved by Houston, seconded by Braham, that the Ladies' Parlor be reserved from use by the college, and that the auditorium be used by the college only for chapel and assembly purposes, and that the remainder of the church building be at the disposal of the college. Carried."
>
> "Moved by Coulter, seconded by Brownlee, that the college be invited to use the auditorium of the church for its Sabbath evening services .... Carried."

During the ensuing months of the college year, not only daily chapel but many classes were held in the church for the college enrollment, which had grown to almost 500. Thus, the church was able to reciprocate for the assistance it has so often received from the college.

In the same year, when it was learned that the Session had voted to buy 300 Psalters for the congregation, the teacher's training class taught by Dr. Elizabeth McLaughry and the Men's Bible Class taught by Mr. Dan McQuiston petitioned Session to reconsider its proposed action and instead to buy the new Psalter-Hymnals recently brought out by the Board of Publication, in which in addition to the metrical Psalms there were more than 150 hymns. A referendum vote was taken in the congregation as to its preference, and by a quite substantial majority the hymns won; so Psalter Hymnals were ordered for the church, and the new Bible Songs Hymnal for a secondary book for the use of the Sabbath School, young people's societies and prayer meetings. For the first time in its 118-year existence the congregation was going to sing hymns in public worship! How the ancient fathers in this New Wilmington Israel would have been appalled at such a development.

In March, 1928, Mr. William McElwee, Jr., the Clerk of Session, proposed a motion, which was seconded by N. E. Sampson, that the system of rotary eldership replace the time-honored plan of lifetime membership on the Session. But the time was not yet ripe for this action, and the record says briefly: "Motion lost."

Some years were still to pass before the rotary system was put into effect. It is now a constitutional requirement.

The basis of union of the two congregations had made no provision for a Board of Deacons, and so this particular function had been allowed to die out in the united church. But in time the need began to be felt quite acutely for the valuable services of such a body--which after all had been a part of the New Testament Church. So in March, 1943, the Session voted to constitute a Board of Deacons of nine members, to which women were to be eligible as well as men. And from the time of its installation in 1943 to the present moment the Board of Deacons has rendered outstanding service to the church. The writer of this history can bear grateful testimony to the unfailing assistance it gave to him, to the Session, and to the congregation, during his pastorate.

The war years of 1941-45 laid heavy demands upon the ministry. The government was requesting churches to release their pastors for limited periods of time for work with the service men in the great military camps and cantonments throughout the nation. Dr. Neale was one of those who volunteered for such service, provided his congregation would consent to release him for a limited time. He was especially qualified for this service because of his war experience under the YMCA during World War I. The Session unhesitatingly granted his request, and he was given leave of absence for the month of February, 1943, and was sent to Laurinburg, North Carolina. In its meeting of March 10, 1943, the Session recorded the receipt of the following letter from the Session of the Laurinburg Presbyterian Church:

> "The Session of the Laurinburg Presbyterian Church wishes to express its sincere appreciation of the services of Dr. J. Ralph Neale who assisted us in our ministry to service men during the month of February. Dr. Neale gave himself unstinedly and wholeheartedly to this work. He is admirably equipped for this type of work and met with a ready response from the people of the church and from the service men. His ministry encouraged us in our existing program, inspired us to a larger program, and strengthened in every way our church's ministry to the soldiers and their families."

From 1934 to 1946 Dr. Neale added to his pastoral responsibilities the teaching of some courses in Bible in the college. (He was "Doctor" Neale now, for he had had the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity conferred upon him by his Alma Mater, Muskingum College, in 1930). By 1946 the burden of his preaching, teaching, pastoral and administrative duties was beginning to tell upon him and in October 1946, he offered his resignation to Session and congregation. It was regretfully accepted and he was released by Mercer Presbytery, and subsequently made his home, with his family, in Florida, where he still lives. His 26 years of ministry to the newly-formed New Wilmington congregation were a period of great advance both materially and spiritually.

CHAPTER XI

"Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow"

REV. R.P. MacDONALD
1947 - 1954

During the brief interval of pulpit vacancy following Dr. Neale's resignation the pulpit committee was busy, and in the Spring of 1947 recommended Rev. Robert P. MacDonald, of St. Clairsville, Ohio, for the New Wilmington pastorate. Robert Peebles MacDonald was born in New Castle, Pa., in 1909. His college was Muskingum and his Seminary Pittsburgh-Xenia. (Xenia Seminary, after a brief sojourn in St. Louis, had been merged with Pittsburgh Seminary in the latter city, and now became Pittsburgh-Xenia). Following his graduation from Seminary Mr. MacDonald had done a year's post-graduate work in Edinburgh, Scotland. He received a hearty call to New Wilmington and began his pastorate here in the late Spring of 1947.

During his first year he received 58 new members into the church, and throughout his pastorate the church continued to grow. The youth program was reorganized after the pattern recommended by denominational headquarters, and a Pioneer Society organized for children from six to twelve. A Craft Hour was developed for seventh and eighth graders, who met at the church after school hours for training in various crafts and hobbies, and for Bible study, under adult leadership, along the lines of the Youth Club program which had been so successfully developed by President Will Orr of Westminster College during his previous pastorate of Westminster Church in Des Moines. For several years this was a popular feature of the church's youth activities, and it brought many of the adults into closer touch with the children and youth of the congregation.

In 1948 Mr. MacDonald's salary was raised to $4000, and the benevolence budget was increased by 15 per cent. During that year the church helped the college play host to the General Assembly, and the church people opened their homes to many of the commissioners. The church sanctuary was used for several Assembly sessions.

The music program presented something of a problem, as it had done intermittently for some years previously and as it would continue to do for some time in the future. The difficulty lay in the fact that the congregation was about evenly divided between those who wanted a large volunteer choir with a competent paid leader, and those who preferred a smaller unit of paid professionally trained singers. At the congregational meeting of 1948 the issue came to a head, and the majority voted for the continuation of the paid quartet. We read in the minutes of this meeting that "some heat was engendered" by discussion of this and other aspects of the church program and its proposed budget, and that Mr. James McLaughry rendered useful service in soothing ruffled feelings and restoring harmony.

In 1952 the congregation undertook the partial support of Rev. William An-

derson, who had just gone out the year before as a missionary to the South Sudan. This support has continued throughout all the ensuing years. Westminster College was put into the church budget for $1000, Pittsburgh-Xenia Seminary for $500; and this support has also continued to the present.

During 1950-51 Mr. MacDonald served also as instructor in Bible in Westminster College. In 1952 his alma mater, Muskingum College, honored him with the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

In the meantime, the congregation took the important action, at a called meeting on July 9, 1950, of substituting the rotary, or "limited term" system of eldership for the "life term" system. The vote was 95 to 28 in favor of the new system. The Board of Deacons had already been operating on this principle for some time. On August 24, 1951, occurred the death of Mr. William McElwee, Jr., who had served as Clerk of Session for more than forty years. Mr. McElwee was an able attorney who had had much to do with the formulation of the basis of union by which the two congregations had been drawn together into one. He had served two terms in Pennsylvania's General Assembly. The tribute to him which the Session had published in The United Presbyterian said: "Both as clerk of the Session and as a God-fearing citizen, he left an indelible stamp on the life of the entire community." Mr. G. Ross Ellis was elected Clerk of Session in his place.

During 1951 the roll of the congregation was drastically revised, reducing the active membership to 685. This is one of the rather sad surgical operations that all congregations have to engage in from time to time.

In 1952 the congregation accepted the gift of a handsome hand-carved Communion Table, presented by Mrs. J. I. Reaney in memory of her husband. The Table was dedicated in October of that year.

The summer of 1953 was an exciting time for the congregation, and especially for its young people, for New Wilmington was the locale of the national convention of the Young People's Christian Union. Church and college cooperated in playing host to the nationwide group of delegates. Mr. Thomas Sarver of our congregation was the coordinator of the convention, in his capacity of Secretary of Youth Work for Mercer Presbytery, and received high commendation for the success of his labors, as well as for the fact that under his leadership Mercer Presbytery had received the highest efficiency award for the third successive year.

Dr. MacDonald introduced the practice of using some of the college students to assist him in conducting public worship. The Session also voted him the paid assistance of a selected student in some aspects of the growing youth program. By the Spring of 1954 Dr. MacDonald felt that he had completed his ministry in New Wilmington, and he accepted a call to the Reid Memorial Church of Richmond, Indiana, terminating his pastorate here at the end of May. He had been a studious and thoughtful preacher and a faithful pastor; and the congregation had prospered under his dedicated ministry.

Mr. Robert F. Galbreath, Jr., was appointed chairman of the Pulpit Nominating Committee charged with the responsibility of seeking a successor to Dr. MacDonald. During the autumn of 1954 the speaker for Spiritual Emphasis Week at Westminster College had been Dr. Richard W. Graves, the editor-in-chief of

the church school, youth and worship materials published by the denominational Board of Christian Education in Pittsburgh. During his week of college ministry in New Wilmington the Pulpit Committee went to hear him and later entered into correspondence with him. Arrangements were made whereby he and Dr. Addison H. Leitch, President of Pittsburgh-Xenia Seminary, should alternate, Sunday by Sunday, in supplying the New Wilmington pulpit. In January, 1955, the congregation made out a call to Dr. Graves and he accepted it, his ministry to begin on March 1.

Richard Warwick Graves was born in Utica, New York, on January 3, 1898. He was a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh in the Class of 1920, but before his graduation he served for more than a year with the 13th Regiment of Marines in France in the First World War. Following his graduation from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 1922 he had three pastorates: DuBois, Pa., Pullman, Washington, and Drexel Hill, Pa. The Pullman, Washington, pastorate had related him closely to Washington State University, its campus not more than a half-mile from the church, and many of its students and over forty of its faculty worshiping there. From his third pastorate, in Drexel Hill, a suburb of Philadelphia, he had been called to the associate editorship and later the full editorship, of all materials and periodicals published by the Board of Christian Education, and had served in that capacity for almost twenty years. During his Drexel Hill pastorate he had been honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Westminster College, and during his editorship in Pittsburgh Westminster honored him again with the degree of Doctor of Letters. In 1951 the Board of Christian Education had published a selection of editorials and essays by him under the title, "Saints and Silhouettes."

At the time Dr. Graves was under consideration as a possible pastor for New Wilmington he was 57 years of age; so he suggested that if a call should be forthcoming, it should be made out for a limited term only, so that the congregation would have no fear that it might be "stuck" with him in his old age! A limited-term call was constitutional in the former United Presbyterian Church of North America; it is no longer so in the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. So Dr. Graves was called for a four-year term, renewable if desired by both parties. At the end of the third year of this pastorate the congregation voted unanimously to extend the call for another four-year term when the first term should be concluded. Dr. Graves agreed to the extension and stated his firm intention to retire in 1963, at the end of his second term.

At this point the author of this history is faced with the problem of writing about his own eight-year pastorate! He can only promise that he will try to be as objective as possible.

For some time there had been a growing conviction on the part of those charged with leadership in the congregation, particularly those in the field of church school and youth work, that the church needed expanded facilities if it were to fulfill its mission in the community. Many of the classrooms were overcrowded, and some of them were not well adapted to the use to which they were being put. Various surveys were made, and studies of probable community growth. With the beginning of the new pastorate it was felt that the time had come to act. A

building committee was appointed under the able chairmanship of Mr. Daniel H. McQuiston and the recommendations of this committee adopted: namely, that the property north of the church be bought and a north wing be added to the church structure to match the south wing; together with some substantial changes in the existing structure to make the largest possible use of the floor space. The total cost including equipment was estimated to be about $150,000. A vigorous financial campaign was planned seeking pledges for a three-year term; later, this was extended for two years. The trustees were authorized to borrow up to $140,000 from banks on a five-year first mortgage basis at 5½% interest. The Wells Organization, professional directors of financial campaigns, was employed, and succeeded in securing pledges totaling approximately $105,000. The willingness of many to extend their three-year pledges for another two years made up the difference. Work was begun in the Spring of 1957 and completed early in 1958. W. G. Eckles Co. of New Castle were the architects and the firm of Hunter and Minteer the builders. Work teams made up of men of the congregation under the leadership of Mr. Earl Black, in a fine "do-it-yourself" spirit laid much of the tile flooring, painted the interior walls and contributed much additional labor, so materially reducing the total cost and enjoying a fine fellowship in the process. The handsome new North Wing with its attractive Youth Lounge, its bright-colored classrooms, its recreation areas and its new equipment, was dedicated in impressive services on February 16, 1958. Within five years it was all paid for, and at the annual meeting of the congregation on January 17, 1963, the mortgage was burnt, while the congregation sang the Doxology.

It was during Dr. Graves' pastorate--on May 28, 1958, to be exact--that a momentous event for the entire United Presbyterian denomination had its consummation: its union with the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. to form a new denomination: The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Appropriately, this union took place exactly one hundred years after the union of 1858 that brought the Associate Presbyterian Church and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church together to constitute the United Presbyterian Church of North America. In an "informational" vote the New Wilmington Session showed the strength of its approval of the proposed merger of the two Presbyterian bodies by recording all votes in the affirmative but one. With the union, the New Wilmington Church and the Neshannock Church now became sisters instead of cousins, and during ensuing months found many ways of cooperative endeavor and activity--notably, in a combined program for the young people of the two congregations. Both now belonged to the newly-formed Shenango Presbytery.

One aspect of Dr. Graves' ministry which seemed to be particularly fruitful was his practice of setting aside Tuesday afternoons for counseling, and many of the college students, church members and townspeople availed themselves of this opportunity for talking over their problems and seeking guidance. And on the Lord's Day students generally formed from one-third to one-half of the congregation.

In October, 1959, the congregation observed its 150th anniversary. An attractive sesquicentennial brochure was prepared by Mr. Norman Igo and his com-

mittee. A congregational dinner was enjoyed, with greetings from neighboring pastors, recognition of new members, reminiscences of former days brought by the Hon. Walter Braham, Esq., and Dr. James Blackwood, and an address by President Will W. Orr of Westminster College. The special speaker on Anniversary Sabbath was Dr. J. Calvin Reid, of Pittsburgh.

Though the new construction in 1957 had added a north transept to the sanctuary, the enlarging congregation made it advisable to convert what had served as the Sabbath School chapel in the south wing to a south transept to the sanctuary, with permanent seating instead of the chairs which had served heretofore; and this was done in 1961 rendering the sanctuary completely cruciform. It was not unusual for both transepts as well as the central body of the sanctuary to be well filled on the Lord's Day.

In November, 1961, an event occurred which compelled the congregation to consider the securing of a full-time assistant to the pastor. Dr. Graves without any previous warning suffered a severe heart attack, which put him in the hospital for two months and necessitated a long convalescence. Many were the tokens of the congregation's affection and prayerful concern during this period of their pastor's illness. At the Session's request, Dr. Milo McFeeters, retired missionary from a lifetime service in Egypt as teacher in Assiut College, undertook the responsibility for much of the pastoral work; and Dr. Boice Atwell, a retired pastor in Beaver Falls, was secured as interim preacher for the interval, and greatly endeared himself to the congregation both by his sermons and the spirit of his service. By February of 1962 Dr. Graves was able to return to the pulpit, and by slow degrees to his full pastoral responsibilities. But the Session and the congregation were determined to give the pastor an assistant; and after some searching for the right man secured the services of Rev. Jerry R. Kirk, who had been since 1956 assistant pastor in the Mt. Lebanon Church, Pittsburgh, Pa., with special responsibility for the church's youth program and for the Christian education organization generally. Mr. Kirk, then 31 years old, began his work in New Wilmington in August, 1962, and immediately began rendering effective service, particularly in organization of the teaching ministry of the church and in the sharing of both pastoral and preaching responsibilities. He and Dr. Graves worked most happily and harmoniously together, and his coming brought a real lightening of the load which the pastor had been carrying alone.

True to his original decision to retire from the pastorate and from the active ministry after eight years as New Wilmington's pastor--a decision of which the congregation had been fully apprised beforehand--on February 28, 1963, Dr. Graves relinquished the pastorate, eight years to a day after his coming here. He can gratefully testify that it had been for him a most happy and blessed association. The congregation held a beautiful "retirement party" for him, conspicuous for its loving spirit and for its generous gifts. Shortly after retirement he was able to purchase the Old Manse from the congregation, and there he continues to live. Two months before his retirement the congregation voted him the honorary title of Pastor Emeritus.

Mr. John C. O'Melia, a member of Session, was elected chairman of the

REV. J.R. KIRK
1963 - 1967

Pulpit Committee for the securing of a successor to Dr. Graves. After considerable exploration of various possibilities, it was decided that the congregation could not do better than to elevate Mr. Kirk, the assistant pastor, to the full pastoral position. After all, he had already commended himself to the church in many ways: as a strong biblical preacher, an attractive and popular friend of youth, and an executive who took pleasure in the minutiae of administration. The call which was extended to him he accepted, and thus there was an "irreducible minimum" of time lag between Dr. Graves' pastorate and his own. In the Spring of 1963 Mr. Kirk became the fourth pastor of the united congregation which had been formed in 1919.

Jerry Ross Kirk was born on May 11, 1931, in Seattle, Washington. He was graduated from the University of Washington in 1953 and from Pittsburgh-Xenia Seminary in 1956. While in the university he had been on the Varsity Tennis Team and had played both football and baseball; and his athletic experience and his engaging personality gave him a fine entree with young people. His field of special interest was that of Christian education, and now as senior pastor he continued the program of revamping the church's training ministry which he had begun as assistant. He instituted, with the Session's approval, a dynamic summer program of activities for the congregation's youth, and also the employment of a student "intern" throughout the year whose special field would be that of service with college and high school students.

Now that the North Wing had been completed and paid for, the Sabbath School Chapel converted into a south transept for the sanctuary, there was considerable interest in having the pipe organ rebuilt and repositioned, and the chance remodeled. Plans submitted by the trustees met with the approval of the congregation. The total cost was estimated at $47,740, and it was voted to borrow $35,000 on an open loan for a four-year period and to apply the money received from the sale of the manse ($12,000) to the same project; and to conduct a brief financial campaign in the congregation toward the liquidation of the debt. This was successfully undertaken. Dr. Ross Houston was the capable chairman of the Organ and Remodeling project. The organ was completely disassembled and shipped to the Moller Company in Hagerstown, where it underwent rebuilding, revoicing and expanding. On its return, it was relocated, so making possible the enlarging of the choir loft, the removal of the battery of "false pipes" behind it and the substitution of a handsome new stained glass window rich with Christian symbolism. The central pulpit type of chancel was changed to the divided chancel with pulpit and lectern, and with the Communion Table repositioned in the center.

It was voted to secure an assistant for Mr. Kirk with the status of assistant pastor. The choice fell upon Rev. John W. Stewart, Jr., a Westminster College

graduate, Class of '56, and of Pittsburgh-Xenia Seminary, Class of '59. Mr. Stewart was currently serving a Congregational church in Pittsburgh and working toward a graduate degree in the University of Pittsburgh. Interestingly enough, during his senior year at Westminster he had lived in the United Presbyterian manse, and had been of vital help in the church's program of activities with high school youth. Mr. Stewart was installed as assistant pastor on Sept. 22, 1963, and served with great effectiveness, both as dynamic preacher and strong popular co-pastor in the large area of Christian nurture. After capable service for two years he was released at his own request in order to pursue further his goal of a doctorate of philosophy, and moving to Ann Arbor, Michigan, to do work in the University of Michigan's Graduate School.

REV. J.W. STEWART
Assistant Pastor
1963 - 1965

This was the period when the entire denomination's thought was focussed on the refashioning of its Confession of Faith. There was a strong element in the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. which felt that a new statement of Christian faith and obligation was needed for relevancy to the changing times, since the historic Westminster Confession had been drawn up in terms of the thinking of a very different period in history. There were many in the Church, however, who were shocked at the very thought of abandoning the Westminster Confession or even of relegating it to a secondary place; although the former United Presbyterian Church of North America had been bold enough to do that very thing, back in 1924, and had substituted for the old revered Confession its own much briefer Confessional Statement, which was given priority. At any rate, as the work of restatement proceeded toward what would ultimately be called "The Confession of 1967," there was a strong feeling on the part of many of the more conservative-minded in the Church that a more "biblical" emphasis was needed, and this sentiment was crystallized in the formation of a group calling itself "Presbyterians United for Biblical Confession."

Rev. Mr. Kirk was very active in the formation of this national group and in the pursuit of its ends, and was chosen to be its president. This necessitated much correspondence and considerable travel; and at his request the Session gave him two months' leave of absence, during September and October of 1965, in order to facilitate his work with PUBC. Since Mr. Stewart had just left to prosecute his studies in Michigan, the Session requested its pastor emeritus, Dr. Graves, to assume the pulpit and pastoral responsibilities of the two-month period; which he did. It remains to be said that the activities of Presbyterians United for Biblical Confession did unquestionably secure the writing and ultimate adoption of a somewhat more "conservative" Confession of 1967 than had been originally drafted.

In 1965 Miss Mabel Hover retired from the position she had most faith-

fully and efficiently occupied as church secretary since 1954. She continued to serve two days a week, while Mrs. William Wilson took over the larger part of the secretarial responsibility; and in October, 1966 Miss Hover following illness relinquished even her part-time service. Three of the church's pastors had reason to be grateful for her fine-spirited service. After many years' equally devoted labors, Mr. Walter Hawk was given his retirement as church custodian. Both were publicly honored in a congregational meeting.

After Rev. Mr. Stewart's departure and the return of Mr. Kirk from his leave of absence, the whole pastoral load was carried by the latter until Mr. Stewart's successor could be found. This successor proved to be the Rev. Ronald Oglesbee, who came to the assistant pastorate in New Wilmington in July, 1966. Mr. Oglesbee was a graduate of Bowling Green State University in Ohio, and a member of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary's Class of '63. His first pastorate was with the Liberty Presbyterian Church, Delaware, Ohio, from which he came to the New Wilmington assistant pastorate. His special responsibilities were much the same as those that had engaged Mr. Stewart, and he fulfilled them equally well. He probably preached the shortest sermons the New Wilmington pulpit had ever known--often not more than fifteen minutes in duration--but they were always well thought out, searching, and constructive; and nobody was ever heard complaining of their brevity! He excelled in youth leadership, and rendered a fine pastoral ministry; and his excellent capabilities came to the fore during the months following the departure of Mr. Kirk when the major responsibility fell upon his shoulders.

In the early Fall of 1967 Mr. Kirk accepted a call from the College Hill Church in Cincinnati, after a ministry of four years and two months as New Wilmington's senior pastor. His pastorate had been a period of marked spiritual growth for many in the congregation and one of further beautification of the material fabric of the sanctuary. Dr. Joseph Henderson, head of the Education Department of Westminster College and a member of the church Session was chosen chairman of an able Pulpit Nominating Committee. In order to lighten Mr. Oglesbee's load, Dr. Graves was invited by the Session to share both preaching and pastoral responsibilities, and this he did during most of the period of the vacancy. He and Mr. Oglesbee found it a joy to work together, both in planning and performance.

REV. RONALD OGLESBEE
Assistant Pastor
1966 - 1968

Probably something should be said at this point about developments in the church's ministry of music. It was during Dr. Graves' pastorate that the persistent attempt to combine a paid group of trained singers with a volunteer choir was finally given up as impracticable. Dr. Clarence Martin, head of the College Music Department, was secured to direct a choir of "selected" volunteers. With the enlargement of the choir loft, the choir

was considerably augmented, and after other responsibilities necessitated Mr. Martin's yielding his directorship to Mrs. Donovan, to be succeeded in turn by Mrs. Schoenhard, the enlarged choir continued to be a superb musical organization, the equal of any choir in the largest and most opulent city church. The church's ministry of music had come a long way from the gingerly acceptance of a choir limited to singing only what the congregation could sing along with it! And with the congregation's adoption, in the autumn of 1955, of the newly published Hymn book prepared jointly by a committee representing five different Presbyterian and Reformed Churches (on which committee Dr. Graves had been a member), New Wilmington's congregational singing had also been greatly enriched since the days of exclusive psalmody and the "lining out" of a precentor.

The present sanctuary, looking toward chancel

Dr. Henderson's Pulpit Nominating Committee did its work well, and after much search recommended the Rev. William H. Philips to the congregation. His election was unanimous, and on the evening of September 8, 1968, Mr. Philips was installed as the fifth pastor of the New Wilmington United Presbyterian Church. In the following November, Mr. Oglesbee accepted a call to the Hickory, Pa., congregation. He had rendered outstanding service here.

Mr. William Harvey Philips was born in Tanta, Egypt, on August 17, 1933, a son of missionary parents. His college was Muskingum, and his seminary Pittsburgh-Xenia, Class of '57. His two previous pastorates had been Rochester, Pa., and Glade Run, Pa. From the latter he and his wife went to Scotland in October, 1965, where he did graduate work in Glasgow University

The present building, with north and south wings

under the tutelage of the renowned Dr. William Barclay. After two years in Scotland he added six months of further advanced study in Basel, Switzerland, returning to this country in the summer of 1968. Shortly after his return he received his earned degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Glasgow University. Now Dr. Philips is exercising a potent and creative ministry through the blessing of Almighty God and the rich qualities of his personality, his preaching, and his pastoral concern.

POSTSCRIPT

So here our story of one hundred and sixty years of the life of a church comes to--what? Not an end, but a fresh beginning. It has been the story of two conservative Presbyterian churches in a small Scotch-Irish Pennsylvania community which merged into one, regrouped, consolidated, and became one of the most germinal, one of the most fruitful, churches in its denomination. To say this is no exaggeration. Since the beginnings of the modern missionary movement early in the last century, this congregation and its forebears has been passionately devoted to the worldwide spread of the gospel. More than forty of its sons and daughters have laid their lives on the line for Christ--in Egypt, in the Sudan, in Ethiopia, in India, in Pakistan; and in no less difficult and needy fields in this country. To these may be added many valiant daughters of the congregation who have accompanied their husbands in the same farflung ministry. When one thinks of the men and women around the world who have found newness of life in Christ through their devotion, it would not be amiss to substitute "New Wilmington" for "Zion" in the words of the 87th Psalm: "And of (New Wilmington) it shall be said, 'This one and that one were born in her.'"

With equal spirit of dedication, at least twenty-five of this congregation's sons have entered the ministry of the Church at home. (We know the names of twenty-five of them, and it is probable that the names of others have been overlooked). Of those who are now living and in the active ministry of the gospel in America we list the following:

Wesley Anderson
Theodore Anderson
John C. Brownlee
Joseph Brownlee
Walker Brownlee
John Galbreath
Matthew Gilliland
Bruce Johnston
Fulton Kissick
Robert McCrumb
Charles McCormick
Calvin Rose
Harry Rose
Robert Rose

In addition, the New Wilmington Church has been a spiritual mother for many Westminster College students who have worshipped in her sanctuary and have often served in her church school and youth program.

But the greatest contribution this church (or any church that is faithful to its Lord) has made and continues to make to the cause of the Kingdom of God, is simply the ongoing, day-by-day moral and spiritual enrichment of men and women in every walk of life. For in the deepest possible sense, every disciple of Jesus Christ, in whatever vocation, is "called to the ministry."

And though the time we are now living in is yeasty with change, revolution and revolt, the New Wilmington United Presbyterian Church enters it with no fear, but only with excitement and the thrill of adventure. For the future is as bright as the promises of God.

SUPPLEMENT to the HISTORY

of the

NEW WILMINGTON
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1969 - 1984

By

Paul Gamble

THE NEW WILMINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1969 - 1984

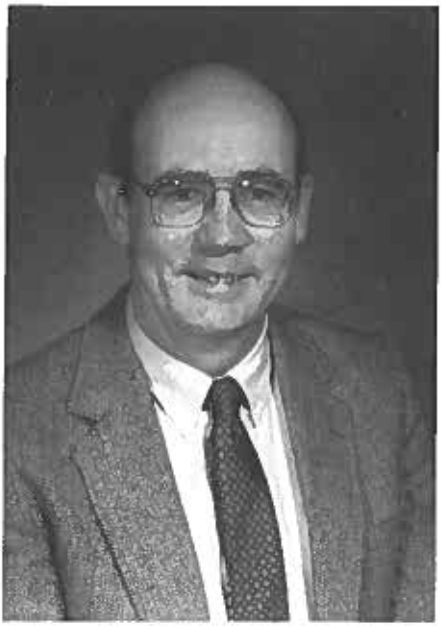
Renovated Fellowship Room

FOREWORD

The request from the 175th Anniversary Committee that I prepare an addition to Dr. Graves' excellent *History of the New Wilmington United Presbyterian Church* was received with mixed emotions. My admiration for Dr. Graves as a person, a churchman, and a writer made me feel hardly worthy to pick up the pen he had relinquished. On the other hand, the same admiration stimulated a desire to extend his work to cover two more pastorates.

In November of 1968, the session had given me the responsibility for having Dr. Graves' history published in time for the 160th anniversary in the fall of 1969. Working with his manuscript and his suggestions, I carried out my assignment. His history was published just after his death in September, 1969. If I could ask Dr. Graves if he would like me to write this addition, I think he would say, "Yes, I wish you would." I therefore want to dedicate this effort to the memory of my friend, Richard W. Graves.

- Paul Gamble



REV. W. H. PHILIPS 1968-1975

THE PHILIPS PASTORATE (1968-1975)

The congregation of the New Wilmington United Presbyterian Church met on June 30, 1968, after listening to a sermon by Rev. William H. Philips, and voted to extend to him an official call to become their pastor. The terms of the call provided a base salary of $9,500, along with a $2,000 housing allowance, $1,200 car allowance, $200 leave allowance, and $1,495 for pension, making a total package of $14,395. Dr. Philips came to his new pastorate well prepared by virtue of having been raised in Egypt by missionary parents, having served two previous pastorates, and having studied abroad for three years at Glasgow, Scotland, and Basel, Switzerland, thereby earning a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Glasgow University.

Within a few weeks he moved to 224 Carol Drive in New Wilmington with his wife Lois and their daughters Amy and Tina. (Two more daughters, Jennifer and Carrie, were added to the family during their residence here.) Dr. Philips began his productive pastorate August 1, and he was officially installed on September 8 as fifth pastor of the united congregation which had been formed in 1919.

One of the first questions facing Dr. Philips was whether or not he should have an assistant pastor. Dr. Graves recorded that following his heart attack in 1961 "the session and congregation were determined to give the pastor an assistant." Rev. Jerry R. Kirk was selected as the congregation's first assistant pastor, and after he succeeded Dr. Graves as senior pastor in 1963, he had as assistants Rev. John B. Stewart from 1963 to 1965, and Rev. Ronald Oglesbee from 1966 to 1968. Dr. Philips discussed the matter of an assistant pastor in a newsletter, expressing the opinion that the congregation and its ongoing programs were almost too much for one pastor to handle satisfactorily, but not demanding enough to justify two pastors. So a decision was made to seek the assistance of a Director of Christian Education, and the congregation, meeting March 30, 1969, approved such an addition to the staff.

As a result, Joy Tobin, a member of the congregation who was already active in Christian education programs in the church, was named to the position. She was installed the following September as Director of the Order of the Towel (the towel being a symbol of service), but she was referred to more often as a DCE than a DOT. With a salary of $5,000 per year, the job was considered part-time,

but Mrs. Tobin devoted full time and more to reorganizing the church school and youth program, developing new opportunities in adult education, and seeking additional volunteer workers for various church programs.

Adult education received high priority from the very beginning of Dr. Philips' pastorate. A significant part of this program was the Bethel Bible course, an intensive Bible study program extending over a two-year period. This program had been started by Jerry Kirk in 1966 when he attended an intensive training course at headquarters in Wisconsin and then started to teach a two-year master course designed to prepare additional teachers for the congregational phase of the program. In 1967, however, Mr. Kirk accepted a call to the College Hill Church in Cincinnati, leaving this class suspended at the midpoint. Joy Tobin, a member of the class, then took the training course in Wisconsin and completed teaching this master class.

The congregational phase started in the fall of 1969 and combined with it were other elective courses. These were offered on Wednesday evenings and extended through three seven-week terms per year. The Bethel program continued over a number of years. There was a graduation ceremony in May, 1971, for the first classes to complete the congregational phase, and Dr. Philips taught another master in-depth course for teachers from 1972 to 1974. The elective courses, some of them scheduled on Sundays at 9:40 a.m., covered a variety of subjects and were taught for the most part by Dr. Philips or college professors.

Joy Tobin completed two years as Director of Christian Education, resigning effective September 1, 1971, to return to school teaching. In his annual report Dr. Philips expressed "our gratitude to her for the tremendous energy and creativity she brought to her work." The budget for 1972 provided an increased salary allowance of $7,500 for a full-time Director of Christian Education. The amount proved insufficient, however, to secure a satisfactory candidate, so the 1973 budget increased the amount to make possible an option for either an assistant pastor or a DCE. As a result Stephen Wilburn was hired in June 1973 to serve first as a lay assistant, pending his early ordination, then to serve as assistant pastor. His base salary was $7,000 but the various extras brought the total package up to $11,560. Mr. Wilburn, a graduate of Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California, brought with him a wife, Susan, who became church organist, and a daughter, Amy. During their residence in New Wilmington a son, Peter, was added to the family.

The ministry of music continued at a high level of excellence throughout the Philips pastorate. Dr. Philips was a talented baritone soloist and sometimes participated with the choir in special presentations. In 1969 Herman DeHoog succeeded Carol Schoenhard as choir director. Both were members of the college music faculty. In 1971 Margaret (Peggy) Preston began a two-year tenure as both organist and choir director. Edwin Tobin served as choir director most of the time from 1973 to 1976. Eliot Newsome also served for a short period as director of the adult choir and his wife, Shirley, served for a time as director of children's choirs. Organists during the Philips pastorate included Westminster students John Wilson and Robert Stratton, Margaret Preston, and Susan Wilburn, who served from 1973

to 1976, also directing children's choirs.

Mention should be made of others who provided significant services to the congregation during the period. There were three women who served successively as church secretary: Barbara Blakely from 1968 to 1971, Rosetta Shingleton from 1971 to 1974 and Elizabeth Shillito from 1974 to 1976. Dr. Robert Woods continued to serve effectively throughout this period as church treasurer. A number of college students and members of the congregation gave valuable assistance in supervising youth programs. Those who served as clerk of session during the Philips pastorate were: Ross Ellis 1966-1969, Fay Reed 1969-1972, Jack Welch 1972-1973, and Dewey DeWitt 1973-1976.

There were a number of property improvements made during the Philips pastorate. In 1969 new carpet was laid in the aisles of the sanctuary, and in the basement new chairs were purchased for the social hall and the ladies lounge was remodeled. A congregational meeting in May 1972 approved the purchase of the Gillespie property immediately north of the church for the sum of $25,000, the funds to come from the Lindley bequest. Subsequently the old house was torn down and the property graded and seeded, providing an attractive side lawn. Also in 1972 the sanctuary was renovated with new wall-to-wall carpeting and new pews. Before the end of Dr. Philips' ministry, plans were developing for further renovation in the basement.

Early in his pastorate Dr. Philips initiated the publication of a congregational newsletter called *What's New*. After editing the early issues himself, he recruited Tom Sarver to serve as editor starting in March 1970. Mr. Sarver served effectively in this capacity for three years, after which editorial responsibilities for the newsletter were turned over to Paul and Anna Mary Gamble who served for about two years. Grace Schantz became editor in 1975 and in 1976 the name of the newsletter was changed to *What's Up*. Mrs. Schantz rendered outstanding service in editing the newsletter until January 1983, when the responsibility was assumed temporarily but effectively by the church secretary, Mary Malott.

Each year of the Philips pastorate was marked by events of special interest. 1969 witnessed the observance of the 160th anniversary, including publication of Dr. Graves' *History of the New Wilmington United Presbyterian Church.* A committee, chaired by Fillmore Campbell, arranged a celebration in October featuring Dr. Wallace Jamison as guest speaker. The observance was touched with a sense of loss due to the death of our beloved pastor emeritus, Dr. Richard W. Graves, just prior to the publication of his history. A memorial statement adopted by session said in part, "But even death cannot dissolve the relationship between Richard Graves and this congregation. He will continue to be a source of inspiration to many of us as long as we live. His discerning mind, his noble spirit, and his indomitable faith in God will also live on in printed copies of his sermons and editorials, for he had the gift of conveying the subtleties and depths of life in strong, lucid prose."

In the spring of 1970 many members of our congregation were involved in the Leighton Ford Crusade in New Castle. Women in New Wilmington held prayer meetings for six weeks preceding the crusade, and 35 men and women of

our congregation made personal calls to 325 homes. In January 1970 a congregational meeting approved revised By-laws which included, along with minor changes, a provision for "open minutes" whereby any member of the congregation in good standing could have access to the minutes of the session, the deacons, and the trustees.

In March 1971 there was a special meeting to consider our congregation's response to "eight urgent concerns" that had been identified by the previous General Assembly. As a result groups were formed to study and consider action on five of these concerns: (1) People without the Gospel, (2) Racial Equality, (3) Polarizations in Church and Society, (4) Youth and the Generation Gap, and (5) Equality for Women.

In the summer of 1972 our congregation responded generously to needs created by disastrous floods in northwest Pennsylvania. A special offering was taken to help with the rehabilitation of churches and manses in the stricken area, including paying the expenses of 24 of our young people who participated in two clean-up projects. Later the congregation voted to allocate $10,000 from the Laura Thompson Fund toward the restoration of a flood-damaged church.

In March of 1973 Junior Church was started during the last part of Sunday morning worship service under the direction of Rev. Judson McConnell, Dean of the College Chapel. In 1974 during a pulpit vacancy at the Neshannock Church, Rev. Marshall Berryhill, who was serving as moderator, suggested an informal exploration of uniting the two New Wilmington United Presbyterian churches, but the proposal was rejected by the session of the Neshannock Church.

In June 1975 a group of women appeared at session meeting with a plan to organize all of the women in the congregation to provide services for weddings, funerals, and special events. The organization was to be known as "HELP," an acronym for "Have Every Lady Participate." Session approved the plan for a one-year trial, and it proved so successful that the organization has continued to provide helpful services up to the present.

The annual budget grew during the Philips pastorate from $79,810 in 1969 to $101,365 in 1974. The growth was mostly to keep pace with inflation. A pattern developed for giving to fall considerably behind the budget during the summer months and then to almost catch up toward the end of the calendar year. Income shortages occasionally made problems for balancing accounts at year's end. Because of this the budget for 1975 was reduced, for the only time in many years, to $98,685. In his last annual report Dr. Philips expressed a hope that some plan could be found to avoid year-end budget problems.

Membership at the beginning of the Philips pastorate was 756. By 1971 the figure was 681 with most of the reduction coming from removal of inactives from the rolls. By 1975 membership had come back to 712.

On September 2,1975, Dr. Philips reported to the session that he had accepted a call to the Front Street United Presbyterian Church of Hamilton, Ohio, effective October 1, thus bringing to a close a productive seven-year pastorate. A man of many talents, he was perhaps most effective as a teacher in various settings: in the pulpit, in his adult education classes, in his periods of instruction at

session meetings, and in other contacts. He is fondly remembered by members of the congregation for his excellent speaking and singing voice, for his friendly way of associating with others, and for his sly and subtle sense of humor. He is assured of a warm welcome whenever he has opportunity to revisit the church.

THE NELSON PASTORATE
(1976-1983)

A congregational meeting on September 28, 1975, accepted Dr. Philips' resignation, elected a pulpit nominating committee, and approved a change in the By-laws increasing the number of Trustees from six to nine. The pulpit committee included: T. S. Mansell, Chairman, Ross Ellis, Anna Mary Gamble, Lois Hopkins, Lloyd McCracken, Robert Meadows, and Carla Van Dale. Arrangements were made for Rev. Dale Bowne of the Grove City College faculty to fill the pulpit three Sundays each month, with Assistant Pastor Wilburn filling in the fourth Sunday.

On June 6, 1976, the pulpit nominating committee presented as their choice for new pastor, Rev. Arthur W. Nelson from Baltimore. Following his candidating service, the congregation met and voted to extend a call to him with the following terms: $15,500 for base salary, $4,000 for housing allowance, $1,260 for car allowance, $200 for leave allowance, and $3,120 for pension, making a total package of $24,080.

Mr. Nelson was born December 20, 1930, in Brooklyn, New York. He was graduated from Lafayette College in 1952 and from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1956. While serving for 13 years as pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Pluckemin, New Jersey, his congregation grew from 250 to 900 members. In 1969 Mr. Nelson became pastor of the Govans Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, Maryland, where he was serving when he accepted the call to New Wilmington. The Nelson family, including wife Phyllis, Peter, aged 20, and Lesley, 18, moved to 230 North Market Street. Mr. Nelson assumed his pastoral duties August 1, and was duly installed September 19, 1976, as sixth pastor of the united church.

Assistant Pastor Wilburn had resigned effective August 31, but due to vacation and severance pay had actually left before Mr. Nelson started his pastorate. Other resignations included Sue Wilburn, organist, Eliot Newsome, choir director, and Elizabeth Shillito, church secretary. As in the case of most new pastors, Mr. Nelson had some immediate staffing problems to address. Kathy Harlan, a Westminster College student, was hired as organist and served effectively for three years. Ed Tobin agreed to return temporarily as choir director, and Connie Gross was chosen to serve as church secretary. Miss Mary Lynn Tobin was engaged to work full time with music and youth programs starting in November, and additional part-time help was secured for senior and junior high groups. Miss Tobin directed children's choirs during her first year and in September 1977 took over direction of the adult choir from her father.

Emphasis on adult education continued in the Nelson pastorate. The time

REV. A. W. NELSON
1976-1983

for the Sunday morning worship service was changed to 10:30 for the summer of 1977, and then a decision was made to continue this hour year round in order to provide time at 11:30 for adult education classes. These courses, which became known as "options," became quite popular. They covered a wide variety of subjects and made effective use of the wealth of teaching talent in the congregation. Originally scheduled for three ten-week terms, with three courses offered each term, the schedule was later reduced to two terms per year. Mr. Nelson proved to be an effective teacher in this program, usually offering a course related to the Bible or to theology.

A major property improvement project was completed shortly after Mr. Nelson started his pastorate. In 1974 the Long Range Planning Committee had presented a proposal for renovation of the large basement social hall. After protracted negotiations over costs and funding the project was finally approved at a cost of over $50,000. The work, including new ceiling, lighting, carpeting, and redecorating, was done for the most part in the interim between pastorates and was completed in the fall of 1976. During 1977 the sanctuary was repainted at a cost

of $3,400, and the pews were removed from the south transcept area, formerly the Sunday School assembly room, to facilitate more flexible use of the space. In the fall of 1978 the deacons solicited sufficient funds to build a ramp entrance for the handicapped from Market Street into the north wing. Another property improvement project started with a bequest from the estate of Ida Ligo. A decision was made to use the funds for refurbishing the fellowship room south of the sanctuary. In 1982, the furnishings were selected by a committee, and a beautiful finishing touch was added in 1983 when William Miller built a lighted display featuring the stained glass windows that had been removed when the north wing was added.

Two projects involving our congregation in cooperative ventures with the other churches in the community were in an exploratory phase when Mr. Nelson came to New Wilmington, and both developed during his pastorate. One of these was the sponsorship of refugee families. Starting in 1976 and continuing to the present the churches of the community have provided both financial and personal assistance to a series of families in terms of travel, housing, furnishings, clothing, and employment. The other project was an enlarged ministerium providing for three lay representatives from each church to serve along with the ministers. Known as Christian Associates of Wilmington Area, abbreviated to CAWA, the group assumed responsibility for planning and conducting community worship services and set up task forces to deal with problems involving Youth, Aging, Family, and Single Parents. In 1981, CAWA took action establishing an executive committee composed of the ministers and the larger group faded out of the picture.

The first part of the Nelson pastorate witnessed a new church secretary each year with Connie Gross serving from September 1976 to September 1977, Christine Prather from October 1977 to June 1978, and Sara Lightner from June 1978 to June 1979. Then Mary Malott, wife of Prebytery Executive Fred Malott, brought both stability and a wealth of talent to the position, serving from June 1979 through June 1984. Our new church secretary is Judy Yeropoli. After serving as church treasurer for 23 years, Dr. Robert Woods retired at the end of 1977 and was presented with a plaque recognizing his outstanding service. The duties of treasurer were assumed by Sam and Janice Farmerie who continue to serve effectively. The clerks of session during the Nelson pastorate were Tom Carver, 1976-1978, and Dewey DeWitt, 1978-1984. Rev. James Cummings, a retired missionary, rendered valuable assistance to the pastor and the congregation as a volunteer minister of visitation from 1978 until he moved to California in 1983. Mention should also be made of the many years of faithful service of Iva Woods as church librarian.

After a year and a half of able and dedicated work with music and youth programs, Mary Lynn Tobin left at the end of May, 1978, to attend theological seminary in preparation for the ministry. The congregation gave her a new guitar as an expression of their appreciation. She was replaced by Michael Imperiale, a graduate of Westminster Choir College who had served for four years on the music faculty at Peddie School. He and his wife, Dottie, arrived in New Wilmington in July, 1978, to begin a productive ministry. As Music and Youth Director, Mr.

Imperiale directed the adult and youth choirs, developing an interesting new kind of high school choir featuring modern music. Known as Wilmington Sonshine, the group developed a demand for their services at various religious gatherings around the area. In his youth ministry Mr. Imperiale also developed small "core" groups of young people for Bible study and devotional purposes. After two years he left in July 1980 to attend theological seminary in preparation for a broader ministry.

Staffing then took a somewhat different turn. A decision was made to provide needed assistance for the pastor through a number of part-time workers, and the plan was implemented during the summer and fall of 1980. Lola Christy was selected to serve as Administrative Assistant with a special responsibility for developing volunteer assistance for various church programs. Karen Latta was hired to direct the adult and children's choirs and Brooke Hopkins to direct Wilmington Sonshine. Other members of the congregation were lined up to work with junior and senior high groups under the direction of the pastor.

The plan proved to be quite effective. Lola Christy was an able assistant to Mr. Nelson, and during the year and a half interim following his departure, she proved invaluable in keeping church programs functioning smoothly. Mrs. Christy resigned effective with the installation of the new pastor September 9, 1984, in order to open the door to a new direction in staffing. Brooke Hopkins resigned as director of Wilmington Sonshine, effective September 1, and Mrs. Latta was named director of all choirs. Organists over the more recent years have included Julie Myers who served from July 1979 to June 1980, Terri Campbell from June 1980 to February 1982, David Coffey from September 1982 to December 1983, and Kathryn Tasota who has served since February 1984. Assistant Lou Hopkins has rendered valuable service, filling in during interims between regular organists. A seminary intern, Gordon King, came from Louisville Presbyterian Seminary in August, 1982, to work under Mr. Nelson's direction, mainly with youth programs. The appointment, which was to have been for one year, was terminated the following January at the time of Mr. Nelson's resignation.

In January, 1977, the congregation approved a change in the By-laws to permit session members, deacons, and trustees to serve two consecutive three-year terms, instead of limiting them to one term as the original rotary system had decreed. Also in 1977, the Thomas Newcomb Memorial Fund was designated to provide the honorarium for the speaker at the week of evangelistic services traditionally held in February. The monthly "pot luck" dinners held on Sundays after the worship service also started in 1977.

The congregation approved another change in the By-laws in 1978, extending the period for the ordination and installation of new officers from four weeks to eight weeks after their election. The year also witnessed an unusual amount of local interest in a denominational issue, the ordination of homosexuals. A General Assembly task force was recommending leaving decisions in the hands of the Presbyteries and congregations as in the past, while a minority report was requesting that General Assembly prohibit the ordaining of practicing homosexuals as ministers, elders, or deacons. Our local session took action requesting that study

of the Task Force report be considered for one of the spring options. In response an option course was set up with Dr. Robert Van Dale as discussion leader. The session later took action calling on commissioners to the Assembly to support the minority position, which eventually was adopted by General Assembly.

An important development in 1979 was our congregation's participation in the Major Mission Fund, a denominational effort to raise $60,000,000 to support a broad range of mission projects. Our session approved a goal of $45,000 to be paid over three years as our share in the venture, and named Joe and Betty Henderson to serve as co-chairmen for the solicitation. A highly successful canvass brought in pledges totalling over $46,000 and within three years payments exceeded the goal. In 1980, another controversial issue in the denomination attracted some local interest. Some congregations seeking to withdraw from the denomination wanted to take their property with them, which was contrary to denominational policy. A constitutional amendment subsequently clarified and established the policy that in these cases the property remained in the hands of the presbytery. Our congregation took no action in support of either side.

In 1981, the adult choir appeared in beautiful new white robes and later red and blue scapulars were added to make the choir resplendent to the eye as well as the ear. In 1982, a Scholarship Loan Fund was established to provide aid for students from our congregation who are working for advanced degrees in theology or Christian education. The program provides for $500 per year from Memorial Trust Funds to be repaid without interest within five years.

The congregational budget continued to grow during the Nelson pastorate. Starting with a budget for 1976 of $113,487, by 1980 the figure was $135,870, and the budget for 1984 is $180,159. The tendency for summer giving to fall behind the budget has continued to some extent but frequent reminders have encouraged pledgers to keep up to date, and year-end giving has been sufficient to avoid any serious problems in balancing the books at the close of the year. Membership in 1976 was 713 and by the end of 1982 it had declined to 690. Another housecleaning of the roll brought membership down to 614 at the end of 1983.

In December, 1982, Mr. Nelson announced his resignation as pastor in order to enter private business. The resignation was to be effective February 15, but with two weeks vacation included, his responsibilities at the church were to terminate at the end of January. This brought to a close a six and a half year pastorate marked by originality in the pulpit, the development of an outstanding adult education program in the after-church options classes, and a growing sense of fellowship in the congregation, fostered in part by the after church coffee hours and the monthly pot luck dinners. Mr. Nelson's talents as a teacher were demonstrated both in his sermons and in his active participation in the options classes. The best wishes of the congregation go with him into his new work.

CONCLUSION

For the interim between pastors, Clerk of Session Dewey DeWitt was given responsibility for liaison among the three church boards, and a pulpit supply committee provided an interesting variety of guest ministers for more than a year and a half. Rev. Joseph Hopkins of the college faculty volunteered to serve in hospital visitation. In October of 1983, a Personnel Committee was established to review concerns involving the pastor and other members of the staff. The committee, composed of one representative each from session, deacons, and trustees, was added to the session committees.

The big news of 1983 was the Presbyterian reunion which brought together the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and the Presbyterian Church, U.S., often referred to as the northern and southern Presbyterian denominations, which had separated at the time of the Civil War. In January, 1984, the session voted to retain Rev. Willis McGill, a retired missionary, as temporary visiting pastor, and named Harry Craft as the new Clerk of Session.

Session initiated the search for a new pastor by meeting with the Ministerial Relations Committee of Shenango Presbytery for guidance and then electing an ad hoc committee to select a Pastor Nominating Committee, which was later approved by both session and the congregation. The committee was composed of Bob Latta, chairman, Rowena Bauer, Esther Ellis, Brooke Hopkins, Darwin Huey, Ruth McCracken and Bob Wushinske. The committee conducted a congregational survey to provide input for the Church Information Form, which after being approved by the Ministerial Relations Committee, was forwarded to the Program Agency in New York. Thus started a process that was to involve 85 meetings of the PNC, the review of 308 dossiers of prospects, listening on tape or in person to 45 of these, and finally personal interviews with the top prospects. After the nominee had been selected, the PNC had to get session approval for terms totalling $37,670 for an unnamed pastor designate, and the nominee had to meet with the Ministerial Relations Committee of Presbytery for approval of both the nominee and the terms. Finally on April 8, 1984, the PNC presented to the congregation as their nominee, the Rev. Timothy L. Beal from Cleveland. Following the presentation service the congregation met and voted overwhelming approval of the committee's choice. The terms of the call were: $19,000 for base salary, $9,000 for housing allowance, $2,000 for car allowance, $5,320 for pension and hospitalization, $2,000 for FICA tax, and $350 for study leave, or a total of $37,670. The Pastor Nominating Committee merits the commendation and gratitude of the congregation for carrying through a lengthy and difficult assignment and for selecting a promising prospect for our new pastor.

Mr. Beal was born on July 6,1950, the son of Rev. J. Rodney and Margaret Orr Beal, and the grandson of Dr. John Orr, who had a long and distinguished career as a teacher and administrator at Westminster College. Mr. Beal attended Westminster and University of Michigan, receiving a B.A. degree from the latter in 1971. After graduating from University of Michigan Law School in 1975 and serving two years with a Detroit Law Firm, he felt called to the ministry and

REV. TIMOTHY L. BEAL
1984-1990

enrolled in McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, where he received a Master of Divinity degree in 1979 and is currently enrolled in their doctorate program. From 1979 until he accepted the call to New Wilmington he served as Associate Pastor of the Fairmount Presbyterian Church of Cleveland Heights. After moving to 219 Meadowbrook Drive in New Wilmington with his wife, Cherie, and children Joshua, Jordan, and Karis, he assumed his duties at the church the first of July. He was installed on September 9 as our seventh pastor.

This review of recent congregational history would not be complete without a discussion of several developments that belong not to one pastorate or another but extend throughout the period. It was during this time that women of the congregation, who have always been given a very generous share of the work, have come into their own in terms of representation on the church boards. In spite of a reputation for conservatism, our congregation was among the first in the presbytery to elect a woman elder, Isabel Sarver in 1963. The following year Mrs. Harris Stewart was elected and ordained an elder. But when Dr. Philips started his pastorate in 1968, there were no women on session. At the beginning of the Nelson pastorate there were three, and now the session includes eight women and seven men. For many years women have been well represented on the board of deacons and the present count is nine women and six men. There are seven men and two women trustees, so the balance for all three boards is 20 men and 19 women.

Some mention should be made of the SERRV project which was started locally in the mid-sixties by Lou Hopkins and Iva Woods. An acronym for Sales Exchange for Refugee Rehabilitation Vocations, SERRV operates through Church World Service of Windsor, Maryland, to provide a market for self-help handcrafts from many nations around the world. Starting on a small scale, our local project has grown with the help of volunteers, working for a number of years under the direction of Marti Boyd, and in more recent years under Peg Ocock. SERRV now has its own permanent shop in the church basement which is open at certain hours each week. Proceeds from the enterprise have been given, in conjunction with the Mission and Planning Committee, to support many mission projects.

A perennial problem since 1958 has been that of an appropriate name for our congregation. When the two United Presbyterian churches in New Wilmington were joined in 1919 to form one congregation, there was some positive significance to adopting as a name, the New Wilmington United Presbyterian Church.

With the church union of 1958, however, there were once again two United Presbyterian churches in New Wilmington, so the name was no longer appropriate. During the 26 intervening years various efforts have been made to find and adopt an appropriate name, but without success. Meanwhile, to avoid confusion our church is often referred to as the "Market Street Church." Dr. Philips, at the outset of his pastorate had hopes of finding a solution to this problem, but efforts over several years culminated at a congregational meeting in January 1971 in a majority vote against further consideration of a name change. A recent effort to solve the problem resulted in a rejection, at a congregational meeting in February, 1984, of a specific proposal to change the name to St. Andrews Presbyterian Church of New Wilmington.

Dr. Graves included in his history a list of sons of the congregation who were serving in the ministry of the church. To that list we may add the following who have been ordained to the ministry in recent years: Wallace Brown, LoAnn Christy Fairman, John Hopkins, Jim Morrison, Doug Pratt, David Stoop, and Jack Wetzel.

As this history supplement goes to press, plans are developing for the observance on October 13 and 14, 1984, of the 175th anniversary of the beginning of our congregation. An able committee, chaired by Margaret (Peg) Mansell, is planning a Saturday evening dinner and musical program, and a special Sunday morning worship service with Rev. John Galbreath as the guest minister. It is our hope that both the anniversary and this history which is a part of it, will provide a better understanding of where we have been, so that we may better understand who we are and where we are now, and may be better able to set the right course for the future under the guidance of God and the leadership of our new pastor Rev. Tim Beal.

Addenda:

Other members of the congregation who had been ordained.

Willis McGill

Mary Lynn Tobin

HISTORY

of the

NEW WILMINGTON
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1984 - 2009

By

Dorothy J. Pollock

Forward

A special thank you goes to Dorothy Pollock who spent many, many hours writing this section of the history. Gratitude also goes to the following people who collected information and helped in many ways to record the life of the New Wilmington Presbyterian Church.

Lola Christy
Dewey DeWitt
Beverly Dorman
Janice Farmerie
Sam Farmerie
Bill Halttunen
Jack Hanes
Joe Hopkins
Fritz Horn
Matt Hosie
Pam Mansell
Jan McClelland
Scott McGrath
Margaret McKee
Peggy Musser

REV. TIMOTHY L. BEAL

Rev. Timothy L. Beal, who had come to New Wilmington Presbyterian Church in 1984 as our seventh pastor, was blessed with great organizational skills. During his five-year pastorate, he strengthened the church committee structure. He increased the three committees (Session, Deacons and Trustees) by adding Christian Education, Worship, Stewardship, Mission, and Membership and Evangelism committees. In 1990 he departed New Wilmington Presbyterian Church and went to San Diego, California, to start a new church.

REV. WILLIAM G. MCCOY

At the congregational meeting on April 26, 1992, the Pulpit Nominating Committee composed of David Trautman (Chair), William Halttunen, Sally Huey, Scott McGrath, Peggy Musser, John Norris and Cathy Smith presented the name of Rev. William G. McCoy as the candidate to be our Senior Pastor. The call was approved with a package of $26,700 salary and $20,000 housing, plus pension, study leave and medical insurance. On July1, 1992 he began his service as the eighth pastor of New Wilmington Presbyterian Church. Rev. McCoy was born in Wheeling, West Virginia where he graduated from high school. He received a BA degree in Psychology in 1978 from West Virginia University. In 1980 he graduated from Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science. He worked in the funeral business with his father before graduating from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary with a M. Div. degree in 1986. Bill, his wife Mary, and their three daughters, Lindsay, Anne and Eleanore, moved into their house on Orchard Terrace. During his tenure, youth programs increased and a cooperative yearly mission trip to the Dominican Republic with the Clearfield Presbyterian Church was begun. He worked with Habitat for Humanity projects and promoted the Campaign 2000 fund raising project to update the church building. An accomplished singer and guitarist, Bill helped to form the Praise Team, a musical group that provides a blend of contemporary and traditional music in the worship service. Bill not only participated in the group, but also occasionally substituted a "verbal" sermon with a "singing" one. Adult Bible classes were held on Wednesday morning. A weekly Fellowship of Christian Athletes for high school students met at his home at 6:45 a.m. Bill further expanded the New Wilmington Presbyterian Church committee structure by adding Peacemaking and Finance Committees. In 2006, Bill McCoy

REV. WILLIAM G. McCOY
1992-2006

accepted a call to the First Presbyterian Church in Charleston, West Virginia after 14 years of ministry at New Wilmington Presbyterian Church. For the next two years, Rev. Robert McCreight served as our Interim Senior Pastor.

The members of the New Wilmington Presbyterian Church staff during the years 1984 – 2009 were as follows:

Rev. Timothy Beal	Senior Pastor	1984-1990
Dr. Willis McGill	Parish Associate	1984
Rev. Michael Orrill	Associate Pastor	1985-1990
Rev. Richard Sweeney	Interim Senior Pastor	1990-1991
Rev. Candice Cook-Andres	Interim Associate Pastor	1990-1991
Rev. Alexander C. Wilson	Interim Pastor	1991
Jen Elling	Christian Education Director	1991-1994
Caryn Macky	Coordinator of Youth Activity and Ministry	1994-1995
Rev. William McCoy	Senior Pastor	1992-2006
Rev. Thomas Houston	Associate Pastor	1995-2002
Rev. Bradley Watkins	Parish Associate	1994
Rev. Joseph Hopkins	Parish Associate	1995-
Ronee Christy	Coordinator of Children's Ministry	1997-
Scott Hoffman	Youth Director	2003
Margaret Trautman	Volunteer Adult Ministry Coordinator	2002-
Nancy Kleese	Interim Youth Ministry	2003
Kurt Latta	Children's Programs	2003
Rev. Lisa Hickman	Associate Pastor	2004-
Rev. Robert McCreight	Interim Senior Pastor	2006-2008
Beth Mickle	Church Preschool	2007-
Jill Mook Wilson	Church Preschool	2007-
Rev. Ralph Hawkins	Senior Pastor	2008-
Judy Yeropoli	Secretary	1984-1995
Sylvia Stanley	Secretary	1996-1997
Janet McClelland	Secretary	1998-
Janice Farmerie	Treasurer	1984-1990
Kay Taylor	Treasurer	1990-

CAREERS IN MINISTRY

In keeping with its history of encouraging careers in ministry and mission, the church sponsored seminary students who became ordained pastors During the last 25 years, members ordained were Greg Carmer, Drew Elling Sean Martin, Adam Rodgers, Barbara McFarland, Joy Trautman, Catherine Book Craley, Tyler Domske, Scott Hoffman, and Johnny Johnston. Interns Scott Hause and Elizabeth Wallace were also ordained. Those who served in campus ministry to lead college students were Drew and Jen Elling, Steve and Mel Montgomery

Joy Barron, Morgan Whiteleather, and Rachel Huey. Numerous college students have served as interns in the youth programs of the church.

MISSION

The following Mission Statement was approved in 2003:

"New Wilmington Presbyterian Church is a family of believers, called by God in Jesus Christ and led by the Holy Spirit to promote the worship of Almighty God, make disciples and meet human need."

There is a rich tradition at New Wilmington Presbyterian Church of giving, a tradition which benefits not only those who receive the gifts, but also those who give them as well. Mission outreach is a primary focus, and it plays a significant role in the life of the church. Each year 25% of the total budget is allocated to more than 60 mission projects at home and abroad. In 1984, $54,710 was given to mission causes; by 2008, the amount had increased to $296,650. The mission budget has supported numerous missionaries working overseas, disaster relief efforts in the USA, Bangladesh and Central America, Presbyterian colleges and seminaries, seminary student scholarships, Coalition for Christian Outreach, and Frontier Fellowship as well as many others. Sixteen flags in the Ligo Room represent the 16 countries where we support mission. The Alternative Gift Valentine Program has been an annual event since 2001. Since 2007, with the help of the church and community through the Table Project organized by Jim Moose, tables and benches have been built and shipped to New Orleans for distribution to Hurricane Katrina victims. This program continues to help address the enormous need. Local needs include City Rescue Mission, the Woman's Shelter and the Shenango Presbyterian Senior Care Benevolent Fund. In 2000 and 2005, $20,000 was given to Lawrence County Habitat for Humanity for the construction of homes in New Castle. Nearly 300 New Wilmington Presbyterian Church members participated in funding, construction, devotions and lunch preparation. Vacation Bible School raised money for windows.

In 1995, members of New Wilmington Presbyterian Church, along with the members of Clearfield Presbyterian Church, and later joined by Clen-Moore Presbyterian Church, began annual mission trips to the Dominican Republic. The mission trips, which focus on medical and dental clinics, construction, education, Bible School and clean water projects, have benefited the congregation of Rev. Dr. Miguel Angel Cancu, President of the Iglesia Evangelica Dominicana and pastor of the church in Sabaneta de Yasica. Collectively, the three churches raised thousands of dollars to give aid for the cleanup, repair and replacement of churches, homes and schools after a hurricane in Sabaneta de Yasica.

In 2004, eight church members joined the Pittsburgh Presbytery work trip to help Katrina victims in Gautier, Mississippi. Members went to work camps for two summers at Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska. Special Mission projects have involved the New Wilmington Methodist Church for fire relief, Pulaski Presbyterian Church, Habitat for Humanity and the Christmas Giving Tree. In order to learn about churches in other areas, in March 1985 about 10 members visited the Presbyterian church in Clinton, SC to be followed in 1989

by a return visit by the Clinton Church. Partnership with New Castle's Second Baptist Church, an African-American congregation, afforded a mutually rewarding celebration of interracial unity in Christ.

Each year, the Senior High Youth Group, under the direction of our associate pastor and financed by their fundraising projects during the year, has taken mission work trips to such places as Wilmington, NC; Youth Work Camp in Dunkirk, NY; Pittsburgh, PA; Boston, MA; Wilmington, DE; Ontario, Canada; John's Island, SC; Washington, DC; Atlantic City Shore Ministries; Appalachia; Charleston, SC; New Orleans and New York City Inner City.

Registered nurses in the congregation volunteered to begin a Parish Nursing program in 1999. In 2001, Peggy McAnlis became the Parish Nurse, to be followed by Kara Rubaker. Initially, the position was funded in part by a grant from the Carolyn Knox Foundation that could be reapplied for each year. Additionally, pledges and memorial monies were designated for the program. In 2008, the program was funded in part from the mission budget. The Health Ministry Counsel supports, assists and advises the Parish Nurse, volunteers on the Care Team, helps teach church members, plans special worship services, offers prayer support and does visitation. Both the Parish Nurse and the Health Council are connected indirectly to the Deacons.

Parish Nurse Kara Rubaker initiated the Meals Ministry in 2007, and then invited others to participate in the local mission. Initially, this program was funded from the John Cole Memorial, then later by gifts from the Almira Group and others. Emilie Cole and Jane Nelson supervised the project. Every fourth Wednesday, teams of church members sterilize the kitchen, prepare the meals, and then in the morning, package them for delivery. The Parish Nurse and visiting ministers deliver frozen meals to members and friends of the church who are in need.

H.E.L.P. (Have Every Lady Participate) was organized in 1975 to help provide meals for church members at a time of a funeral or for special occasions. Members of the church are called upon to make a specific dish for the meal. This mission is greatly appreciated by the families who are grieving. A number of men have joined the women in the planning and executing of this ministry.

The Peacemaking Committee is concerned with relief efforts, the problems of greening and energy, and the distribution of information concerning conflicts, environment, stewardship and areas of unrest. In 2006, the committee conceived and organized the "Multiply the Gifts" project that Rev. Bob McCreight launched with a sermon. The sale of goods and services from members over a six-month period in the Ligo Room netted over $10,000. The committee contributed the profits to support restoration efforts after Hurricane Katrina in Gautier, Mississippi and to the Senior High summer work project in New Orleans. Additional income donated by the congregation was invested in domestic and global peacemaking concerns, including the SABEEL Center in Israel, the Near East School of Theology in Lebanon, and materials for AIDS care-giving kits. The committee has cooperated with activities at Second Baptist Church in New Castle. Families who were sent to the Peace Making Conference informed the

congregation about our role in peacemaking.

In 2008, a quilted peacemaking banner was produced for the 2008 General Assembly to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the development of the Commitment to Peacemaking for Presbyterian congregations. The banner depicted the six major peacemaking programs that have been led by the Peacemaking committee at New Wilmington Presbyterian Church.

The SERRV (Sales Exchange for Refugee Rehabilitation Vocations) Fair Trade Shop was housed at the church for over 40 years. The purpose was to give people in developing countries in all parts of the world an outlet for their hand crafted items by paying them fair wages so that they may in turn give their children an education, provide safe drinking water, and give women empowerment. Profits from sales were given to support mission. The committee also took the products to other churches and to Presbyterian Women's meetings where they set up exhibits and sold items. In 2000, receipts of $24,000 benefited not only the provider, but also a number of the church mission projects. Eventually SERRV outgrew the limited church space. In 2006 the committee voted to give Wendy Farmerie the opportunity to purchase the inventory and open an independent store, the Silk Road Market, in New Wilmington. With this expansion, more families can profit through the sale of the handiwork.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In 1984, the Christian Education program used volunteer members of the congregation, with the assistance of college students, to serve as Sunday school teachers and leaders of youth and adult activities. Sunday school classes were for children aged two through grade twelve. Adults attended a choir class, Men's Bible Class, and a Cora McElwee class for women. Ruth Ann Mansell coordinated a Vacation Bible School for 186 students that met with the Methodist Church during the week of the New Wilmington Missionary Conference. Church members and college students led the Sunday Evening Youth Fellowship.

On October 21, 1984, at a special congregational meeting, the vote was 101 to 75 in favor of calling an associate pastor to assist with the growing Christian Education needs. On June 16, 1985, Rev. Michael Orrill was called to be Associate Pastor to direct the Christian Education program for children and youth. Youth Fellowship was reorganized into a senior high and a junior high group. A "time out gathering" for senior high youth met every other week. Two corner classrooms in the Christian Education Annex were redecorated. A children's nursery program was established. Vacation Bible School no longer met with the Methodist Church, but was now directed by the pastor's wife, Cherie Beal. Upon the death of their teacher, Dr. Wayne Christy, class members taught the Cora McElwee class.

Striving to fulfill the vows that the church takes at each baptism, New Wilmington Presbyterian Church takes seriously the Christian education of its youth. In addition to Sunday school, youth groups had been formed. The Youth Club, formed in 1986 to serve grades 1 – 6, met on Wednesday after school for Bible study, choir, recreation, crafts and dinner provided by parent volunteers.

REV. MICHAEL ORRILL
1985-1990

Under the direction of the Christian Education Council, the one hundred church and family members who were contributing their talents to serve in Bible School, Bible Memory Program, Youth Club, Sunday School, Youth Group and Vacation Bible School, gave credence to the vitality of the program. In 1988 the youth group "God's Li'l Rascals" met mid-week for Bible study and to develop social skills. Not all of the 44 who attended were members of the church. The youth program had grown into junior and senior high groups with 20 in each group and Youth Group, grades 1-6 with 40 students, under the direction of Rev. Orrill.

The McElwee class met in a new room made possible by a bequest of Louise Minteer. Because of declining membership, in 1990 the Men's Bible class and the Cora McElwee class merged to form the Adult Bible Class, with Rev. Brad Watkins and Rev. Joseph Brownlee as teachers.

In 1989 Rev. Beal was called to California and in 1990 the service of Rev. Michael Orrill was dissolved when he was called to another church in Salida, Colorado. Rev. Richard Sweeney assumed the position of interim pastor, but he left in 1991 to accept a call to a church in Elderton, PA. The Rev. Alex Wilson came as interim pastor and Jennifer Montgomery, a Westminster graduate and former student worker with youth programs, was hired as Christian Education Coordinator. The program continued successfully under the strong leadership of Jennifer and the spirit of volunteerism of church members.

In April 1992, Rev. William McCoy accepted the call as pastor. An opportunistic spirit of enthusiasm challenged the CE committee members and Jennifer Montgomery Elling. The SALT (Sunday Alternative to Lecture Teaching) class offered fellowship and discussions from books and writings on religious themes to adults. A new youth program, "Creations" met on Tuesday after school for grades 5 – 8. They ate supper, sang, prayed, had Bible study and recreation. It resembled the Youth Club programs for grades 1 – 4. Both programs were staffed with volunteers and Westminster College service teams. The Senior High Youth Group participated in Habitat for Humanity and "Rainbow Kitchen" projects and raised money for their trips. In 1994, Jennifer Elling resigned as CE Director and Caryn Macky was hired for a 12-month interim position as Coordinator of Youth Activity and Ministry. She resigned in 1995 when Rev. Thomas Houston was called as Associate Pastor for Youth and Family Ministries. He directed the H Club Youth Group while church members directed the Youth Club and Creations Under Tom Houston's leadership, there were two teams of youth organized to participate in the Shenango Valley Bible Quizz League, an interdenominationa competition that encouraged high school students to learn or memorize a chapte from the Bible each week. By the end of 1996, Youth Club had over 50 student attending on Wednesday afternoon. Many enjoyed the "hands on" work wit

the Puppet Ministry of Dave and Margaret Trautman. Fifty adults helped with the Vacation Bible School programs attended by 75 children. The program to provide 3rd graders with Bibles was resumed.

By the end of 1997 a restructuring of Christian Education operations was accomplished. All Sunday school programs, pre-school through adult, were put under the umbrella of the CE Committee. Ronee Christy was hired as CE Coordinator for the children and youth programs, and to provide training for teachers and leaders in all programs. The Youth Club was greatly improved by the LOGOS program, which was introduced by Bruce and Pat Milligan. Ronee Christy has continued that program which includes snacks, recreation, Bible study and choir, followed by dinner hosted by adults. Friendships form among the parents who cook. The associate pastor continued to direct and assist with the older youth programs and activities, while also working with the CE Committee. To effect a smoother operation, the Youth Club and Creations were changed from a Tuesday – Wednesday schedule to an extended Tuesday night program. One third of the children and youth participating in these programs did not attend our church. Non-church members were also in the "Hi Club" Youth Group. Often non-member parents whose youth became involved would become interested in and join our church. In addition to the Adult Sunday School class, new adult classes were added in 1998; one for those 20 – 30 years old and a "Back to Basics" class for those not belonging to another class. The latter class emphasized basic beliefs in the Christian church, Biblical literacy, and putting faith into practice. Dr. Paul Musser taught an intensive two-year Kerygma Bible course. Because of the increase in Sunday school classes and memberships, folding doors were installed in the social hall to provide more space. Tom Houston led mission trips, and four covenant groups that were added to the high school activities met mid-week with an adult mentor. A successful Creations retreat was held in the fall of 1998.

REV. TOM HOUSTON
1995-2002

In 1998 the All Church Family Retreat at Westminster Highlands was resumed. Young people enjoyed summer Presbyterian or other Protestant camps. Vacation Bible School had 70 children, led by youth and adults. The children raised money to purchase three bicycles for pastors in The Sudan. Because of declining membership and difficulty in securing a teacher, the Adult Bible and Back to Basics classes merged. In 2000, the PCUSA curriculum was adopted to provide a more comprehensive Bible study and understanding of the Presbyterian Church. Three sub-committees, namely children (nursery through middle school), youth and adult were organized within the CE committee and each

committee included staff, parents and an elder. The baby nursery was available each Sunday from 9am – 12pm with 260 parents and friends as volunteers. In place were the Back to Basics class, two SALT classes and a "Balcony Class" for single and married adults taught by Ronee Christy. Children's church for ages 4 – 6 met during the church hour for a Bible story followed by related activities. In 2001 the children's Sunday school program was revised and classrooms were relocated. The program adopted a "rotation" format that required rooms for art, drama, computer use and audio/visual presentations. The Back to Basics and SALT classes were located near the ramp, rest rooms and social hall for the convenience of older class members.

In 2002, Rev. Tom Houston relocated to Ohio and Scott Hoffman, a Westminster graduate and former intern for Sunday school and youth programs, was hired as Interim Youth Ministry Coordinator. The Hi Club, which became SHYG (Senior High Youth Group) took a mission trip to assist the homeless in Boston. Margaret Trautman secured her certification in Christian Education from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and became volunteer Adult Ministry Coordinator. In 2002, a new library was constructed in the former Cora McElwee classroom. Shirley McMillan replaced Sally Huey after her many years of service as librarian. In 2003, Scott Hoffman resigned to enter seminary. Nancy Kleese was hired as an Interim Youth Ministry Director, and Kurt Latta was hired to direct children's programs.

In 2004, Rev. Lisa Hickman was called as Associate Pastor to direct children and youth programs, which her leadership has greatly strengthened. Creations continued to attract middle school students after school, much to the credit of the ten college students who worked directly with the youth. The revised schedule for youth meetings is as follows: SHYG, Sunday at 7pm; JHYG, Tuesday, Grades 5,6,7 from 6 – 8pm and Grade 8 at 6:30pm. JHYG Guys and Gals meet at 4pm on Thursday for Bible study. The Youth Groups' fund-raising activities have included "slave days," mulch sales (2000-2009) as well as soup and chili sales (1996-2009). Funds raised were used for mission trips and to help needy families. Worship services were greatly enhanced by the songs, programs and meditations of the young people and they have given the adults a look at many areas of faith in new ways. A leadership cabinet of SHYG members was developed to plan and lead events and discussions for the 20 – 30 high school youths. As a tribute to Sandy Edmiston who tragically lost her life in a climbing accident, a mission project, "Sandy's Blankets" was undertaken to support the work of Bethany Huey in Atlanta, Georgia. In 2005, the junior high group became JHYG. We are grateful to a long legacy of committed youth, parents, Westminster College interns and pastors who have laid the foundation for a strong ministry to youth here in New Wilmington Presbyterian Church.

When Rev. Bill McCoy was called to Charleston, West Virginia, Rev. Robert McCreight was hired as Interim Pastor. The capable leadership of Associate Pastor Lisa Hickman and many volunteers maintained a strong, uninterrupted Christian Education program during this transition.

In 2006, security procedures were studied by the CE Committee

concerning child safety; this was required by the church insurance carrier in light of legal responsibilities and rulings by courts in cases of child abuse, accident or supervision neglect. Employees and volunteers in church activities are included in the policies/procedures approved by the Session in the Safe Sanctuary Policy.

A pre-school program, in cooperation with Westminster College, which had functioned for many years under head teacher Marie Miller, ceased operation in 2002. In 2007, assisted by gifts in memory of John Cole along with contributions of others, the church pre-school was opened with the hiring of Beth Mickle as Director and Jill Mook Wilson as Assistant Director. The school enrolled 30 students its first year and has continued to have full enrollment. A pre-school board included Elaine Taylor, Elizabeth Evans, Beth Mickle, Gary Kinnear, Ken Romig, Nancy Welker, Frazier Zahniser, Emilie Cole and Ronee Christy. As a church outreach, the New Wilmington Presbyterian Church Preschool partners with families to educate the total child, cultivating the spiritual, cognitive, emotional, social and physical dimensions of each child of God.

REV. LISA HICKMAN
2004-PRESENT

During the 2007 mission trip to New Orleans, over 60 youth and adults provided assistance to families who had lost their homes and belongings in the Katrina hurricane. Members of SHYG and adults returned to New Orleans in 2008 to record the thoughts and reactions of the residents as they related to the damaging hurricane and to the assistance provided by groups like SHYG.

Adult classes expanded with formation of the 'ISH" class which dealt with various topics presented by class members. Rev. Hickman and others taught short-term classes on particular topics. The Back to Basics class and the CSI (Christians Seeking Instruction) class dealt with a study of the scriptures. The SALT class continued to study selected books. In 2009, a new format for the CE Committee was implemented. A council was set up for each section of Christian Education: Children's Council, Youth Council (SHYG and JHYG) and Adult Council. The councils have a widespread representation of church members. A weekly childcare program for church members and the community meets the needs of young parents.

Rev. Lisa Hickman, in her 2006 report to the congregation, referred to a finding in a Gallup poll: "What a young person believes about God at age 13 is more than likely what that young person will believe about God until death." Lisa's conclusion supports concisely the action of the 1984 Session when she

states, "the direction for ministry is very clear, particularly for the junior high ministry; this time in the church is vital and the leadership is critical for faith development."

MUSIC

The congregation of New Wilmington Presbyterian Church, both as a worshiping community and as participating individuals, has enjoyed the talents and gifts of many through the years, the last 25 being no exception. Karen Latta was Director of Music for 13 years and of the Chancel, Sonshine (high school), Junior and Cherub (grade school) choirs. She provided oversight for worship services and celebration of special events. In 1985, on Reformation Sunday, the Chancel Choir celebrated the 300th birthday of J.S. Bach by presenting the cantata "Ein Feste Burg Unser Gott." In 1987, they sang Vivaldi's "Gloria" during Lent and John Rutter's "Gloria" during Advent. For Reformation Sunday, Dr. Walter Scheid presented the dramatic debate between Martin Luther and Johann Eck along with music. In 1989 the choir presented the Bach cantata "Ein Feste Burg" on Palm Sunday and a Christmas musical "Joyful and Triumphant." Mozart's "Requiem" was presented in 1991. Special events in 1996 included the Taylor University Choir, Youth choir from Chicago, Westminster College Concert Choir, men of the church choir on Mother's Day, Intergenerational Women's Choir, and bagpipes with processional of choirs on Reformation Sunday. Clarence Martin was hired as interim Chancel Choir Director in 1999 when Karen Latta retired. He was followed by Anne Bruening in 2000.

The Children's Choirs, Youth, Cherub, Sonshine, Covenant and Creation, presented many special programs as well. They were directed at various times by Laura Carmer, Cindy Dobish, Joy Deem, Irene Sample, Pat Milligan, Anne Bruening, Ronee Christy and Dan Forsberg. In 1985, the musical "Present Tense" in April, "Kid's Praise 4" in the spring, and "O My Stars....It's Christmas" were performed. In 1987 they presented "Kids Praise 5." In 1984 they sang "From the Beginning." In 1990, they presented "Three Wee Kings," and in 1992, the "Arkeology" musical.

In 1986, Shirley Newsome volunteered to organize two adult Bell Choirs when a memorial gift provided funds for the purchase of a three octave set of Schulmerick Bells. Other Bell Choir directors were Bill Brocklebank, Jay Broeker, and Anne Bruening, along with Gary Taylor who organized the Youth Bell Choir in 1993. In 1993, Bill Brocklebank directed a six-week course for Youth Bells. Three more octaves of bells were purchased along with five octaves of chimes, the latter with a generous donor gift. The first two octaves of bells were given in memory of Roy Burnside by his wife Libby. In 1996, additional bells were purchased, with Westminster College sharing the cost. "The Feast of Carols and Pudding" was presented at Christmas. In 1987, the Youth and Bell Choirs presented "Ring and Sing in Christmas." A complete set of hand chimes gave new sound to the Bell choirs.

In 1990, through gifts and memorial funds, 500 copies of the new Presbyterian hymnal were purchased and dedicated for worship. In 1996, after

the work of the organ search committee was completed, the decision was made to sign a contract with Austin Organ Company to purchase a new organ instead of repairing the old one. $400,000 toward the purchase of the organ was realized from a memorial gift from Don Neal's estate. (See Trustee section for more details). A committee was appointed to oversee coordination of the new organ installation, with chancel renovations, under Franus Architectural Firm. The organ was delivered September 11, 2000 from Hartford, Connecticut. It was used in worship on December 4, 2000 and dedicated with a concert on March 4, 2001 by performing artist, Dr. John Walker, Westminster College graduate. An Inaugural Concert by Jason Kissel on April 29, 2001 was followed by appearances by other former organists.

Organists who have served at the church during the past 25 years are: Kathy Tasota (84-85), Patrick Aiken (Westminster student) (85-88), Bill Brocklebank (88-95), Jason Kissel (Westminster student) (95-97), Dawn Bradley (97-99), Carl Geiger (99-00), Elizabeth Harrison (00-01), Terry Konzen (01-04), and Ray Ocock, our current organist who was hired in 2004. Other organists who have filled in when needed are Lois Hopkins and Peggy Musser.

In 2000, Cindy Dobish and Bill McCoy organized the Praise Team, composed of piano, guitar, drums and vocalists, to integrate contemporary music into the regular service. Original members were Bill and Cindy, Dan Smith, Rick Bruening, Kevin Taylor, Dan Forsburg and Todd Cole. Others later joined the group. Cindy Dobish who became Music Ministry Coordinator in 2006, leads the Praise Team and is Sonshine Choir Director, director of choir alums, men's and women's intergenerational choirs, all of which sing for special services. She also directs the special music for the summer period. Other directors in 2009 are: Ronee Christy, Covenant Choir; Amber Kunder (college intern), Youth Club Chime Choir; Dan Forsburg, Creations; Gary Taylor, Youth Bells; Leanna Stitt (college intern), Youth Praise Team; Anne Bruening, Chancel Choir and Adult Hand Bells. The music program includes four vocal choirs and three bell choirs. In addition to the staff, many church members have put in countless hours to enhance the music ministries: the volunteer choir members, Praise Team, special ensembles, and summer musicians. It is a special blessing when they take their music ministry beyond the walls of the church to the glory of God.

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

Over the years there has been a close tie between New Wilmington Presbyterian Church and Westminster College. Many students, faculty and staff not only attend worship services, but also share their musical talents, teach Sunday School, help with youth programs and serve on church boards. The college radio station, WWNW (88.9 FM) broadcasts the 10:30 a.m. Sunday service for the benefit of shut-ins. Other interaction includes the "adopt a student" program, cookies during final exams, providing work for student interns, and supporting a Christian Coalition staff position. The sponsorship of CAYA (Come As You Are) for college age young adults, was started in 2008, by Ken and Kim Romig and Dave and Tawnee Hunter for the purpose of providing them with a welcoming,

encouraging church home.

DEACONS

The Deacons minister to those in need, to the sick, to the friendless and to any who may be in distress, both within and beyond the community of faith, through a ministry of sympathy, witness and service after the example of Jesus Christ. The Deacons have hosted the Strawberry Festival in June, a church picnic in August, coffee hour after worship services, the potluck meals, escort service for Shenango Presbyterian Senior Care residents who need assistance and the annual Christmas evening celebration. Beginning January 1, 2009, they will expand their ministry to and with the congregation and the local community in visitation, home communion, homebound care, helping those in distress and assisting other ministry teams. They will move from a program-based group to a people-based ministry to serve New Wilmington Presbyterian Church and the community.

TRUSTEES

During the past 25 years New Wilmington Presbyterian Church has made many improvements to the sanctuary and grounds. The following table outlines some of the major maintenance and improvement projects. This includes maintenance and major projects that were initially funded by a 3-year capital funds campaign for $50,000.

In 1992, discussions began concerning the organ which had been built by Hall Organ Co. in 1924 and upgraded by Moller Organ Co. in 1964 when the sanctuary was remodeled and the pipes were crowded behind a thick wall beside the choir loft. After two years of listening to 14 organs in many locations and consulting with representatives, the decision was made to purchase the organ from the Austin Organ Co., Hartford, Connecticut, for a base price of $417,197, a proposal that was approved by the session on May 15, 1994.

Don Neal, through his estate, gave a generous gift of $460,000 in memory of his wife Elizabeth I. Neal. Now it was possible to complete additional renovations in the church. The chancel area was remodeled to accommodate the organ. In addition, a large retractable projection screen was installed behind the ceiling arch with a rear sanctuary projector. A major fund raising campaign covered the $200,000 cost of these preparations. The organ was delivered in September 2000, used on Thanksgiving 2000 and had the final tuning by January 2001. On March 4, 2001, the dedication featured John Walker as the guest organist. Jason Kissel was guest organist for the Inaugural Concert on April 29, 2001, to be followed by other former organists. Permanent hand bell tables were built for the sanctuary. In 2000 the possibility of a balcony for the sanctuary was deemed to be cost prohibitive. In 2001, a van was leased for church use and in 2006 a defibrillator was purchased for the church.

Year	Cost	Project Description
1986	$14,675	Installation of new roof in educational wing
1986	$10,880	Improvement to the stone exterior with new mortar joints
1989	$7,200	Installation of new carpet in the social hall
1992	$70,000	Installation of an elevator in the social hall
1994		Installation of new carpet in the sanctuary
1998		Installation of new sound system with personal receivers for the hearing impaired
1998		Installation of new windows in the educational wing
1999	$70,000	Upgrades to kitchen with new appliances and cabinets and a used commercial grade dishwasher purchased from the New Castle YMCA
2001	$310,000	Installation of new heating system with new pipes and radiators and a dual boiler hot water system with zone heat control
2002	$21,000	Relocation of library to the room east of the Ligo room; new shelving and lighting installed
2002	$38,720	Upgrade to sanctuary sound system; cabinetry added to house the systems' controls
2004	$44,000	Improvements to sanctuary ceiling – replacement of plastered areas between the wooden beams
2005	$160,000	Addition of new drainage system at the base of the social hall to address flooding. The excavation for this project resulted in the need for new sidewalks, parking lot paving and landscaping

SESSION ACTIONS

Session actions that led to procedural changes since 1984 include changing By-Laws to create councils (Christian Education, Worship, Mission, Membership and Evangelism, Deacons and Trustees) to facilitate carrying out the Lord's work. Also, in 1984, youth representatives were allotted non-voting places on the Session and on the Board of Deacons.

Organ pipes at the back of the sanctuary

CONTROVERSIES AND ACTIONS

Controversial issues arose, some of which were supported by our congregation, while others were rejected. Two very contentious issues were the General Assembly positions on homosexuality and abortion. The Session was urged to oppose the General Assembly stance. There was a request to protest this action by withholding per capita payments to General Assembly. A motion to curtail financial support for Synod overseas mission because of disagreement with Synod actions was defeated. Some less controversial issues were the purchase of new hymnals (disagreement being due to omission of "favorites" and gender of God no longer being masculine), and Sabbath Day sales in the SERRV shop after potluck dinners. The latter was banned November 1996 and reinstated in 2000. On July 14, 1989 a letter of protest was sent to the Trustees of Westminster College because of their implementation of a 24-hour visitation policy. On November 11, 1992, the request for WCTU to use the church for film showing was unanimously defeated. However, New Wilmington Presbyterian Church did support the denomination Bicentennial Fund to the sum of $40,000.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

The following activities capture some of the memories of the past 25 years:

- The church has sponsored a softball team in the area church league for most of the 25 years.
- On the third Sunday of each month, a potluck lunch in the social hall follows the worship service.
- The Odd Friday Fellows meet at Ryders Restaurant at 6:45 a.m.
- In 1999, Worship Council organized "Faith in the Arts," a program featuring creative expressions of the congregation. Over a period of six months, church members displayed paintings, stained glass, woodworking, writing, needlework and other creative works in the Ligo Room.
- In 2000, the Membership and Evangelism Committee began to give mugs containing church information to visitors, a promotion called "mugging

our visitors."

- There were various fund raisers and fellowship times over the years. These included game nights, an Amish dinner, attending a Pirates game, square dances, winter weekends at Westminster Highlands or the Castle in Franklin, and the annual Christmas program.
- The monthly newsletter "What's Up" was inaugurated during the past 25 years, as was Kirby's corner, Shepherding Homes, environmental concerns and Blue Christmas.
- In February 1987, a Fellowship of Christian Athletes program was created for the area high school students.
- Services involving other local churches at times included Thanksgiving, Easter Week, Easter Sunrise and a community service in conjunction with the summer Arts and Heritage Festival. The first two rotated among the various churches while the latter two took place at Brittain Lake on the Westminster College campus.
- The Community Women's Bible Study meets bi-monthly at Shenango Presbyterian Senior Care and is attended by women aged 9 months to 90.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Communications Committee was created in 2007 to assess the needs of the church and how we communicate within and outside our church. This includes the church website, newsletters, Sunday morning power point and any other communication related items.

REV. RALPH WILLIAM HAWKINS

On April 6, 2008 the Pastor Search Committee presented the name of Ralph William Hawkins as a pastoral candidate. The members of the committee were: Scott McGrath (Chair), Tim Cuff, Betsy Boyd, Barbara Smith, Debbie Krawchyk and Mary Louise Ireland. By a vote of 267 to 1, the call was approved and he began as our ninth senior pastor in June 2008. He was installed on July 13, 2008. The terms of call were $38,000 salary and $20,000 for manse expenses, plus additional items such as pension, study leave and medical insurance.

Ralph Hawkins was born to two ordained Presbyterian elders in Huntsville, Alabama, but spent much of his youth in New Orleans, Louisiana. He attended King College, a small Presbyterian college in Tennessee, where he majored in Bible and Religion. He received his Master of Divinity degree at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, with earned honors in New Testament Studies. He is enrolled in the Doctorate of Ministry program at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Texas, a pursuit he has temporarily put on hold. While in seminary he served as student pastor of Jackson Presbyterian Church, a 100-member congregation in Georgia. From 1999 until his call to New Wilmington Presbyterian Church, he served at Altavista Presbyterian Church in Virginia.

At 6 foot, 5 inches tall, Ralph is a presence in the pulpit, both physically

REV. RALPH W. HAWKINS
2008-PRESENT

and through his leadership in worship. Believing that mission "is the shape of faith itself," Ralph is continuing this congregation's legacy of active commitment to and involvement in mission, both locally and beyond. He is a gifted preacher, a serious administrator and has a subtle sense of humor. His trademark bow ties have delighted the congregation! His interests include the history and lore of trains, photography and writing.

He and his wife Elizabeth and their daughter Ella live in New Wilmington near the Westminster College campus.

AS WE END THIS QUARTER CENTURY...

The list of the New Wilmington Presbyterian Church staff at the end of 2008 is as follows:

Rev. Ralph Hawkins	Senior Pastor
Rev. Lisa Hickman	Associate Pastor
Dr. Joseph Hopkins	Parish Associate
Ronee Christy	Children's Ministry Coordinator
Beth Mickle	NWPC Preschool Director
Jill Wilson	NWPC Preschool Teacher
Dr. Margaret Trautman	Adult Education
Jan McClelland	Secretary
Ruth Curfman	Assistant Secretary
Kay Taylor	Treasurer
Anne Bruening	Chancel Choir
	Adult Bell Choir Director
Cindy Dobish	Music Ministry Coordinator
	Praise Team Leader
	Sonshine Choir Director
Gary Taylor	Youth Bell Choir Director
Dan Forsberg	Creation Choir Director
Raymond Ocock	Organist
Shirley McMillan	Librarian
Amber Kunder	College Intern
Lindsay McCarty	College Intern
Jill Campbell	College Intern
Nathan Hunter	College Intern
John Magnuson	College Intern

CELEBRATION OF THE 200th YEAR ANNIVERSARY

As we go to press with this supplement that updates two previous histories of New Wilmington Presbyterian Church, plans are developing, under the leadership of a committee chaired by William Halttunen, for the observance of the 200th anniversary of the beginning of our congregation. Publicity for the events of the year will be promoted through the church newsletters and bulletins, the local newspapers and electronic presentations. A photograph of the members of the congregation, taken on February 8, 2009 appears in the history text. The celebration will begin with a kick-off worship service in which members of the session will participate. Guest speakers will be former pastor Rev. William Philips, Shenango Presbyter Rev. David Dawson, and Dr. Richard Dorman, President of Westminster College. Former members who have been called to full time church vocations will be invited to a "get-together" at a time to coincide with Westminster College's Homecoming in October. Rev. Joseph Hopkins will compose a Bicentennial Hymn. Raymond Ocock, current organist, and Lois Hopkins, composer, arranger, choir member and long-time organist substitute, will present an organ-piano concert. Plans will be made for a mission trip to Malawi in 2010. The spirit of our festivities will be "Let's celebrate our roots by expanding our outreach."

200th Anniversary Picture,
Courtesy of Jeff Behm, Photographer

SUMMARY

Our 200th year celebration and this history will remind us of the many years of service and commitment to the Lord's work at New Wilmington Presbyterian Church. Numerous members and interns have been called into the ministry. The mission program, which includes sixty main projects, has expanded far beyond the church walls, with a mission budget that has grown 450% in the last 25 years. Christian Education expansion has touched all ages, especially in the youth groups whose activities enrich the lives of over 100 young people, many of whom are not from families who are church members. The music program, enriched by the talents of many singers and instrumentalists, enriches all worship experiences. Westminster College students bless the church with their presence and their service in the youth programs. Our dedicated officers and church staff continually serve both personally and professionally the members of our congregation of 597 active and 7 affiliate members. And now we will chart the course for our continuing ministry to serve the Lord under the leadership of our Senior Pastor, Rev. Ralph William Hawkins.

New Wilmington
Presbyterian Church
Rooted in tradition • Growing in faith 200